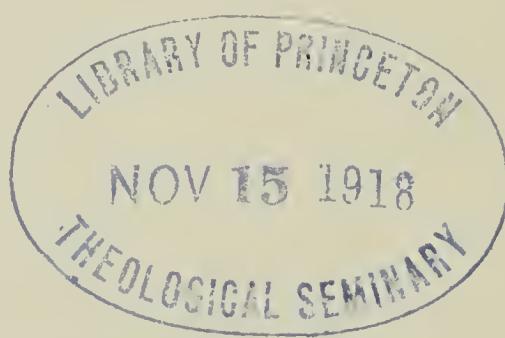


# The Evangelist

—

W. H. D. Koop, Author



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The evangelism of Jesus







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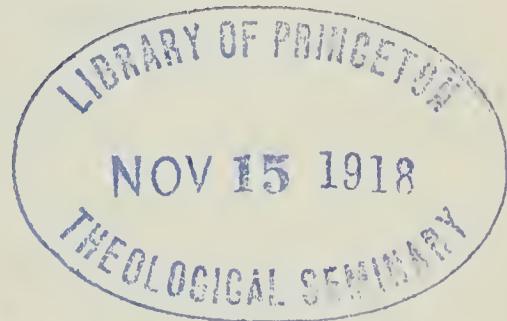
# THE EVANGELISM OF JESUS

# SIX STUDIES IN THE PERSONAL EVANGELISM OF OUR LORD

# For Bible Students and Study Classes

# ERNEST CLYDE WAREING

## EDITOR WESTERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE



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ERNEST CLYDE WAREING

To My Mother  
WHO TAUGHT ME AT HER KNEE  
THE STORIES OF OUR LORD AND  
HIS EARLY DISCIPLES.



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## PREFACE

THIS little volume is intended for the use of earnest people who desire to acquaint themselves with the evangelistic teaching of our Lord. It is neither a scholarly study nor an exhaustive treatment of the subject. It may claim to be a popular presentation of the fundamental truths which form the basis of the work of making Christian disciples. It does not deal with the application of practical methods. These are left to those more familiar with them through experience in the active field of evangelism. It seeks to discuss and elucidate the evangelism of Jesus from the viewpoint of experience. It asks the questions, How did Jesus approach men? Did he always use the same means of presenting truth? What was his goal in dealing with the souls of men? As a spiritual leader, in what respect was he different from other religious teachers? What is the distinctive fact in Christian salvation? It seeks to discover the effects of the influence of Jesus upon the souls of those with whom he had to deal. In this, it avows, is revealed the revelation of God's power to transform men and manifest himself to them in a new way, producing what is known as the Christian conception of God. In each instance of the personal evangelism of Jesus there is a manifestation not only of duty but of the spiritual capacity of the human soul, which brings a revaluation of both the divine and human spirit to every generation of men.

The evangelism of Jesus was always that of personal contact. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus seems to be an exception. However, the contrary is true. It resulted in his finding the invisible and glorified Christ, and in revealing the evangelism of the Holy Spirit who functions against opposing forces as the wind gathers strength when confined by towering walls. Many of the fundamental questions of religious experience appear for discussion in these studies. They will receive answers, it is hoped, that will not only satisfy the mind but lend enthusiasm to follow Jesus in his interest in the souls of men as they grope in the darkness,

feeling their way toward God and the living of a righteous life. With a prayer that they may be an inspiration to many, these studies are submitted to those who love him who has bought us with his own precious blood, and taught us the way of life through the ministry of his Holy Spirit.

The prominence of the doctrine of the Trinity at any given time will depend upon the thought of the time. It is not likely to be at the front when the living controversies of the age relate to theism itself. In defending the reality of God against materialism and agnosticism few will discuss the inner mode of his existence; it is enough to maintain his personality, his character, and his relation to the universe. But this does not disprove the truth and value of the doctrine. It may even be vital in the life and thought of a period when it is not prominent in discussion. At the present day there is less defense and less proclamation of the Trinity than at many other times, but the doctrine itself is more vital than in many periods when it was more thoroughly elaborated and defended.

—W. N. Clark.



## CHAPTER I

# For the Devout Soul

**The Mystical Type**

**The Spiritual Approach**

**Differential Evangelism**

**The Conversion of Nathanael**

**SCRIPTURE: John 1. 43-51**

The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.

And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

## Prayer

*We pray, O Lord, for guidance as we pursue this study of thy methods in dealing with the souls of men. Thou canst*

make real thy world of spirit and quicken our perception of it. We want to know more about thee. When we think of thy kindness and thy tender mercy toward us our hearts are strangely warmed. What can we do to please thee but to open them for thy presence? Reveal to us the secret of communion with God our heavenly Father. Teach us how to trust and exercise our spiritual powers. Save us from being sense-bound, and from living under a starless sky, from the compulsion of walking in darkness when thou didst come to show us the way of light. Our hearts yearn for thee to teach us the difference thou canst make in a life of faith. When we go apart for prayer give us great quiet. Help us to shut out the world with all its restlessness. Help us as we linger to think only of thee, to release our emotions and feel only for thee. Train our spirits to hear thy voice, to attend unto thy will, and to trust thee as always loving us, regardless of our irresponsiveness, and even our sin. What more could we ask of thee, when thou hast provided for us with such bountifulness? We feel that we must grow from more to more. Wilt thou then give us enlargement of spirit, quickness of perception, and assurance of thy protection.

We have ever sought the way of devout souls. We come to study it as those who search for hidden riches. We have found it in our anticipations filled with an endless interest that deepens with the years. We have sought to enjoy its blessing. It has brought to us prophecy of a masterful life, the exhilaration of experiences that have grown eloquent in their appreciation of thy wise provision for all who love thee. It has brought us days when doctrine supported our life, and faith directed our course, and confession lightened our burden. We pray that our path may always lead upward from the world of the profane and the godless. For there are levels of life where faith suffers and despair plays havoc with the soul. Teach us the difference Christ can make in our lives. Help us to realize his power of enrichment and to see the beauty and grace he bestows upon those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. Bring us to the daily confession of him as our Lord and our God. Amen.

## Introduction

The evangelistic methods of our Lord were always deter-

mined by the character of the one with whom he had to deal. He had no systematized plan of approach. No religious formula or established precedent was followed by him. Every man presented a different problem and required a distinct line of treatment. His evangelism, therefore, cannot be reduced to hard-and-fast rules. No man by merely studying his teachings and following his dealings with men can deduce a list of fundamental principles to serve as a guidebook for his evangelism. In all his sayings there is but one sentence that may be received as indispensable, with universal application as an evangelistic principle: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." These words carry an elemental truth. No matter what methods may be required to deal with any specific case, this one thing is strictly fundamental, the evangelism of Jesus begins with Christ—"No man cometh unto the Father but by me." Apart from this claim as the initiatory step, no extended uniformity can be traced in the Master's dealing with men under the evangelistic impulse. However, there are many varieties of men. No two of them, it is claimed, are alike. Upon close analysis, however, they readily classify themselves under various types. In this field we find the material for the study of the evangelism of Jesus. There are always individuals who possess characteristics peculiar to a group. They are said to be typical members of that group. Whatever may be said of them as individuals, may also be said of the group. Any method successfully used in dealing with them may be reasonably expected to apply to others of their kind.

We find in searching the teachings and life of Jesus six different incidents in which he deals with as many different types, illustrating the methods of his evangelism. The conversion of Nathanael presents the mystical type, illustrating the methods of differential evangelism by the way of a spiritual approach for the devout soul. The conversion of the woman of Samaria presents the defective type, illustrating the methods of initial evangelism by the way of a moral approach for the sinful soul. The conversion of blind Bartimæus presents the afflicted type, illustrating the methods of collective evangelism by the way of a physical approach for the importunate soul. The conversion of the thief on the cross presents a radical type, illustrating the methods of

the evangelism of the cross by the way of a sympathetic approach for a distressed soul. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus presents a fanatical type, illustrating elemental evangelism by the way of a concealed approach for a violent soul.

## The Mystical Type

The character of Nathanael illustrates an intense spiritual nature, known as the mystical type. It has a way of perceiving God that makes him most real. It has also more than ordinary power to open the receptive functions of the soul for spiritual impulses. This results in inward illumination and poise, bringing marvelous and almost irresistible influence over the impulses that control the body in which the spirit of man dwells. It presents a frequent demonstration that man is a soul, that he is not a prisoner in his brain dome with no avenues outward but those of the five physical senses. The mystic is an individual in whom the intuitions are especially free and active. He early learns how to shut out the world in the hour of meditation and prayer; how to rest the body, quiet it into a passive state, and to make his mind active. With all spiritual or mental functions operative, with the influence of the physical reduced to its lowest level, he is in that position where God may speak directly to his soul, when it may be said of him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." In the mystical experience comes one supreme and all-pervading thought of God as an indwelling Power, and the consciousness of direct communion with him. Indeed, "God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience." A thirst for him is created that makes all the functions of the soul yearn for him. It brings into the realm of reality, through experience, Saint John's love-words, "We love him because he first loved us." It claims to know him without intermediary and as it were face to face, in the most natural way, with a mental approach to him through love. For the lover cannot bear anything between himself and his beloved. Furthermore, it furnishes the soul with the mystical method of self-discipline, to be used for purgative and practical ends, and to be trusted as the true and only safe approach to that holy life so ardently desired, and without which no man can see God.

It is verily true that the human personality is intended to

be a clear mirror of God; in which his image and similitude can always be seen. Those acquainted with the mystical experience realize the truth of Tennyson's words, "closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet." For the soul of man is a spiritual universe in miniature, in which Christ is born to give life and shed light abroad, and to open the way to God. It was even so with Nathanael, the mystic, as we shall see. He was waiting the coming of Him whose presence would bring life and make glad his spirit with a new faith through the fulfillment of the age-long hope of a devout Israelite.

## The Spiritual Approach

The spiritual approach is one of a number of ways to reach a man's soul. In the case of Nathanael it was the direct route. By prayer and meditation he kept the spiritual highways of his life open. To touch any one of them meant immediate welcome into the inner experiences of his soul. His enlightenment is an illustration of Christ's method. He knew that the same approach could not be made to all men. What would reach one would fail with another. Every man goes across the field of human experience his own way. Hence the same gospel message will not reach all men. Each man is found for Christ when a gospel truth comes home to him, that is, when some part of it for which his moral and spiritual history has prepared him falls across his life. The man living an intemperate life is not moved by the condemnation of the profane or the gambler or of the murderer. He must be approached over another route. In other words, as a fundamental proposition the evangelism of Jesus always takes into account a man's moral and spiritual history. Intuitively he discovered the direct approach in all men with whom he came to deal. He knew that every man should hear in his own tongue the wonderful works of God; that is, the tongue he could understand, the one that would appeal to him, that would seem most wonderful to him. Until that moment appears the gospel seems void and limited. When suddenly some hitherto unstruck note goes flying home to him he gives attention. His soul leaps into action, in anticipation, and ready in all eagerness. The one way to reach his soul clears, and the word of truth sheds the light of God forth, bringing

confession and acknowledgment. The sensitive soul of Nathanael was hidden away in the garden of mystical communion. No new light could reach him excepting over that spiritual approach toward God, and the fulfillment of his faith.

## Differential Evangelism

Differential evangelism is characterized by the fact that it introduces into the spiritual life a new dynamic which cannot be developed by the soul through the exercise of its own powers. In this form are to be found the chief distinguishing features of the work of Jesus in developing the spiritual life. It answers to that need of the human spirit for frequent releases of new impulse and energy. Christian doctrine and truth have power to maintain the soul at the zenith of its capacities, changing the emphasis, making a difference in coloring and emotion, accentuating distinctions, and producing an endless variety of truth in its appeal to the soul. For this there is a threefold demand:

*First.* Doctrine and truth meditated upon for any length of time lose their power to produce enthusiasm for moral initiative, and the soul settles into a mechanical life in which goodness becomes the embodiment of a ritual and the expression of a habit.

*Second.* Christian truths go into eclipse unless they are renewed from day to day in experience. They move into the shadow of those less worthy of consideration. They must be constantly supported by new light to keep them fresh and out in full sight above our intellectual horizon.

*Third.* The life of the soul has a tendency to reduce itself, to lose its abounding enthusiasm for the things of the spirit. The weight of the physical, the handicap of the passions and appetites of the flesh, the daily toil with its exhaustion, tend to restrict, discourage, and subdue the abundant expression of the spiritual life. Unless an evangelistic emphasis that seeks to make a difference with believers is introduced at intervals, the life of the spirit is reduced to the lowest level. If there is offered no change from the old forms, the old types, the old experiences, the old threadbare truths, life becomes a wilderness and a solitary place. If at times a man's religion cannot make a difference for him in hope and faith and heart, he is lost.

## The Conversion of Nathanael

Nathanael is an illustration of a devout man finding new soul-impulse. As an Old Testament believer he was devoted to all the forms and ceremonies of the Hebrew religion. Indeed, he was acquainted with the history of Israel and the message of her prophets. To him the Holy Land was the dwelling place of light. Through the providence of God he was of a distinguished and peculiar people. The past may have been dark, but to him it bore the marks of God's hand. The future was altogether bright. It carried the halo of his hopes. Upon the hilltops of futurity rested his cherished hope of the coming Messiah. He enjoyed all the precious promises of the Sacred Scriptures that lent charm and enchantment to the spiritual life. He was a devout man, living a life of daily communion with God. He had realized in experience the blessings of prayer. He had his hours and his place of religious meditation, and had become a circumspect and upright man. He was an Israelite in whom there was no guile; that is, his devotion and sincerity had so influenced him as to eliminate the family trait that marked his fore-father Jacob, whose guile made him rich in cattle and flocks. But Nathanael had found in his worship of Jehovah the spiritual values that make a changed man. Among a people noted for the cleverness of their guile, he was known for the beauty of his guilelessness. He had all his religion could be expected to furnish him—the power and satisfaction of an upright life. What more could any religion do for him? He had found the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Is not that the purpose of the highest religion? If the believer has been led to the worship of the true and only God, what more can be done for him? Could anything beyond that be recognized as highly supplementary? If he had reached the altitudes, why call him to Jesus? Can Christ do more for a man than cleanse him from guile? This faithful man had climbed to heights of personal perfection known to few men. Why not permit him to remain under the fig tree? Why not permit him to meditate under his own skies? Fig-tree religion is not Christianity. For this purpose Christ came to turn meditation into action, the vintage of the vine into mercy, and the fruit of the fig tree into food for men. Indeed, Nathanael's guilelessness was without value until it gained currency among men.

**A Crisis Came into Nathanael's Life** when he met his friend Philip, who with enthusiasm related to him how he had "found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Being a devout man and acquainted with what Moses had written in the law, he had talked frequently with his friends of the Prophet of the Lord spoken of in Deut. 18. 15: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken"; and that other interesting passage, Gen. 49. 10: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be"; and that other highly prophetic passage, Num. 24. 17-20: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth, and Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city."

With these passages of Scripture in memory, and being familiar with a large number from the prophets, he held in mind a portrait of the promised Messiah. He had looked upon that face in adoration. It had fixed itself in all its ineffable beauty in his thought until he had power to identify the original when he should appear. For when God planned to send his Son into the world he had but one means of making him known, that of the prophet's voice. Through this medium a portrait was drawn possessing coloring and lines different from those found in the picture of the average Jew, or even in the face of a prophet. Anyone acquainted with that delineation of the messengers of God could at once, upon seeing the Messiah as he appeared among men, say, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

The attitude of mind of Nathanael is worthy consideration.

*First.* He was in doubt when informed by Philip that he had "found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." He answered, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

He was a man of candor. Having his misgivings, he did not hesitate to express them. He felt that surely the Messiah would not come from a village unknown and unsung, whose name was not even mentioned by the prophets. That one fact concerning Jesus, son of Joseph, that he was of Nazareth, was sufficient to discredit him in the mind of a student of prophecy.

*Second.* The second attitude of mind was a slight change toward consideration. Philip did not argue. He replied, "Come and see." That was enough. Permit a man to investigate for himself is all that can be asked by doubt. Nathanael committed himself to the personal touch of Philip. He had found One who had delighted his soul. He must share that delight. He was so thoroughly convinced himself, he felt that one had but to see to agree with him. Nathanael was influenced by Philip's confidence. Having an open mind he was ready to sympathetically consider all the facts. He was preparing to observe and consider all he saw. He had inwardly prepared himself by reviewing his mental picture of the Messiah. With a steadfast resolution not to be deceived, he accompanied his friend to see the Man of Nazareth.

Scarcely had he reached the circle of the influence of Jesus than he heard the Man address him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" That was a remarkable characterization. It revealed the fact that he was one who answered to the name which marked the spiritual privilege of the chosen people and connected him with that wonderful victory of faith that transformed Jacob, the wrestler and supplanter, into Israel, a prince of God. Nathanael had small time to observe. He was caught up by the amazing insight of the Man. He could only ask for information, "Whence knowest thou me?" He had gone forth to discover the Christ and to ask many questions. He met himself and looked upon his own character. It was altogether likable, but the fact was, instead of having his mind filled with the claims of Jesus of Nazareth, when he met him, it was thrust full of what his own life of devotion and meditation under his own vine and fig tree had made of him. That was more than passing strange. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." This one fact was overwhelming. His own heart had been revealed to him and he had been connected

with the promises of Israel. It was not that Jesus saw him afar off, when he was in the secret and quiet of his own life, but the fact that he was able instantly to uncover his entire life, and the goal of all his soul struggles. He saw himself under the touch of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, and cried out, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." He witnessed the great confession without going the way of reason. He was convinced by a flash of the intuitions, and passed at once into confidence and unalterable assurance that "Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God." But the process goes one step farther. He is confirmed by these words: "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these." Then, as with an effort to fill out the full capacity of his faith, Jesus said with unusual emphasis: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Nathanael had met Jesus of Nazareth and had come into a threefold experience of reality.

*First.* The reality of a dynamic in man which assured the prevailing power of prayer. His supplications and meditations had not fallen to the earth unnoticed. This One, like unto the Son of God, had taken into account his devotions under the fig tree.

*Second.* The reality of Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, who by the power of spirit could gather up the past, appraise it as of superior value, and discern the action of men's lives regardless of distance and time.

*Third.* The reality of a spiritual world connected with this material world, and between which forces and beings that express and obey the will of God pass to and fro—"Ye shall see . . . the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

In reality, he had a vision of God, different from any he had ever enjoyed. He believed in a Deity, as his fathers had, who lived in the past and wrought wonders in the days of his nation's history. Who he was and how he should think of him was a mystery. He had called him Lord, Jehovah, Elohim. Now he begins to think of him in terms of Jesus of Nazareth. God, an invisible Spirit, was real. He could express himself in a Son. He must therefore be a Father,

capable of expressing himself in emotional power, and directing his energies by intellectual power, and executing his purpose by volitional power.

**The Implications of Nathanael's Confession**, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel," contain the profound teaching of this incident. To accept a Deity capable of expressing himself in a Son means the acknowledging by faith of a personal God. If man understands the psychology of personality, he will readily see that upon its implications is founded the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. If a man accepts faith in a personal Deity, he must interpret that faith in the terms of a Triune God.

Our first course toward the understanding of the doctrine implied in this confession is the acceptance of the fact that there is in all men a sense of God. It is a faculty for the unseen. It may be called the sixth sense. As the eye was made for light, the ear for sound, so the spiritual sense was made for God. In heathen religions that sense was permitted to run without restraint. It flew hither and yon, deifying all mystery, and wonder of hill and mountain, valley and plain, storm and summer rain. It was concentrated upon no definite, specific object for any length of time. It was in constant action and suffered no possibility of atrophy, but failed to gain by fixedness and control any great impulse for growth and development.

In the Jewish, Mohammedan, Christian, and other monotheistic religions the spiritual sense is controlled. It is not permitted to fly everywhere, but is confined and focused on one God. Concentration has its perils, for it produces sense-weariness and failure to respond in appreciation, as the eye concentrated upon an object of beauty wearies or the ear fails to hear a sweet sound unless frequently released for momentary rest. In this age, when monotheism is prevailing more and more, the human sense of God, because controlled, confined, and focused upon a one and only Deity, wearies. Being commanded by the proclamation that the world has come to a place where it must accept the God of our Lord Jesus Christ or have none at all, in many instances it refuses to function and settles into a state of inactivity that is worse than paganism. It is far better to be a heathen, and exercise the spiritual sense in deifying all about you, than to live in an

age of one God and refuse to recognize him, for in so doing the loss of the finest human faculty will be life's greatest regret.

The second implication of Nathanael's confession is that a man may worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and not be a Christian. He may be a Jew. He may be a Mohammedan. He may be a deist or a theist, refusing to be classed among atheists, and still not be a Christian. If this distinction could be driven as a cleavage into every man's life, all would come to see that to be a Christian means far more than accepting the God of the Old Testament. The Christian conception of God is altogether unique and distinctive.

This point is to be emphasized; for many members of our churches, because they do not realize this, are getting no more out of their religion than if they were Jews. Belief in God does not make a Christian. A man thus believing may be religious, he may be devout, but he may not be a Christian. What, then, is the distinctive form of faith that makes a Christian?

The third implication of Nathanael's confession is faith in a personal God who is seeking to express his feeling toward men. Christ was the embodiment of that feeling. When Christ is understood in the light of the Old and New Testament teaching, one doctrine is found as fundamental and essential, distinguishing Christianity from all other religions. That doctrine is the Trinity. It has four well-defined lines of support:

*First.* that of the Scripture. All passages teaching the Sonship of Jesus Christ, and those presenting the office and personality of the Holy Spirit, support it, and have no sound interpretation without its acceptance.

*Second.* Christian experience emphatically bears witness to a divine Father, a divine Saviour, and a divine Renewer. It knows nothing of three Gods, but asserts that these are one. A practical understanding of the Trinity, which cheered the hearts of early believers, still illumines and supports Christian experience.

*Third.* Historic Christianity supports the Trinitarian faith. All through the centuries the growth of the church has been through the line of those who accepted faith in a Triune God. The Unitarian branch of Christianity has had no great

missionary impulse. World conquest has been led by those inspired by a faith in the deity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit.

*Fourth.* Modern psychology supports it. Belief in a personal God demands that personality shall reveal itself. Psychology teaches that personality is constantly seeking to express itself, but is confined to three methods: that of thought, that of emotion, that of volition. In other words, personality is dependent for manifestation upon intellect, sensibility, and will. These prove to be the great avenues over which it goes into action. Furthermore, psychology furnishes a support to this doctrine from its interpretation of religious experience. It claims that man can know a personal God only upon the basis of a trinitarian conception; that only a Deity manifesting himself through intellect, sensibility and will can be understood by a creature endowed by these same faculties to express his own personality.

**A Trinity Based upon Personality** must be one of manifestation. It must be distinguished from tritheism, that would mean three persons and indicate a type of polytheism. A trinity of manifestation on the part of a personal God is a fundamental necessity. For Deity to be personal he must manifest himself in three ways: first, as a being with capacity to think; second, as a being with capacity to feel; third, as a being with capacity to will. Without these functions for self-expression on the part of any being, we are unable to think of him as personal. The Christian conception of God is that of a Trinity of manifestation.

What do we mean by a personal God? This requires a definition of personality. In these days, when Oriental mysticism and doctrines of an impersonal God are prevalent, and when men bearing the name of Christian, by failure to think clearly, are calling God a principle, we must make a positive statement that will not fail to carry the Christian content.

Let us further define ourselves. By personality we do not mean corporeality. That would identify God with a body. Even the personality of man is not dependent upon his body. By personality we mean two things: first, self-consciousness; second, self-determination. By self-consciousness I am aware that I am not the person present with me. I have a feeling of separateness, of individuality, of distinctiveness, that I am

here and he is there. It is even so with the body in which I live. I am conscious that it is not I; that it is my dwelling place; the arm is not I, it is mine. This is the personal realization of self-consciousness. By self-determination I am conscious of my independence of the man I see near. When I act I know it is not he acting, but the result of my own will. I know that he does not control me. I go my way at my will. I am not a part of him, going here and there at his behest. I have power of self-determination. I am responsible for my own action, even to the movement of a hand or foot. They are the instruments of my will and are not responsible for what they do. I am a self-conscious and self-determinative being, living in a body which moves at my will, among other human creatures possessing the same powers as myself.

Christians believe in a personal God who has a self-conscious existence apart from his creations, and who does not secrete, absorb or sustain them as a part of himself.

**Man Is a Triune Being. He Also Is a Personality.** He cannot give full expression to himself through any one channel. He is confined to a trinity of manifestation. He can express himself in any one of three ways—intellect, sensibilities, and will. These constitute the field of human experience. If God is to make himself conscious to the human personality, he must approach him through one of these avenues. It is interesting as well as confirmatory that the doctrine of a Triune God perfectly conforms to that of a triune man.

God the Father is God the Thinker, and articulates with the intellect of man. That conception of God appeals to man's thought. Fatherhood means responsibility and control. It means obligation and sacrifice. It involves the existence of a moral universe and laws for its support. Indeed, it carries all the great thoughts man is capable of entertaining.

God the Son is the expressed feeling of God, and articulates with the sensibilities of man. He is the manifestation of love. He was begotten in affection. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." That appeals to man's sensibilities. God the Son means mercy and concern, feeling and anxiety, sacrifice and suffering on the part of God. These open a path into the wide field of human sensibilities.

He could not reach man's great emotional life through the avenue of intellect by the conception of fatherhood alone.

God the Holy Spirit is the expression of the purpose of God, and articulates with the will of man. The Holy Spirit is the power of God sent to execute his will, to cleanse his temple, to reveal his Son, to make known his truth, to endue with power, to make his paths straight, to tear down kingdoms and build up empires, to declare the acceptable year of the Lord. What man is in will, so is God in and through the Holy Spirit. At this point humanity and Deity may meet in wonderful realization of each other.

On this conclusion rests the real and inviolable truth of the doctrine of the Trinity. It finds its validity in experience. It saves man's spiritual sense from weariness. While it is confined to the consideration of one God, it may vary its interest from God the Father to God the Son and to God the Holy Ghost. By this process in experience it may renew and refresh itself, never fainting, never wearying through the years of a long life. Furthermore, it may be stated that a believer never comes into the full experience of the Christian's God until he comes to know not only the Father and the Son, but also the Holy Spirit. God cannot be known fully in experience by appeal to man's intellect through fatherhood. He is more than intellect, more than father. He cannot be known fully by an experience of Jesus Christ, his Son, appealing to man's sensibilities and entering the field of his emotional nature. God is more than Son, as man is more than sensibilities. Not until the avenue of will through which man expresses himself in the highest ranges of his personality is approached by the unction of the Holy Spirit expressing the will and determination of God does a believer come into the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

So important did Christ consider this for religious experience that he made repeated reference to the work and authority of the Holy Spirit. He rested the future of the Kingdom of Heaven upon him. He exalted the promise of his personal presence in the life of every believer. He made relationship to him the most sensitive point in the spiritual experience by asserting that sin against him could never be forgiven, enforcing the thought that he who neglects the Third Person of the Trinity, never mentioning him, never thinking of him, never recommending him, but satisfying

himself with the thought of God, will have little more in experience than the highest type of Moslem or Jew. To reject or neglect the Third Person of the Trinity, as some Christians are strangely prone to do, is a sin of equal magnitude with that of the Jews, who rejected Christ manifest in the flesh. The full circle of the Christian conception of God must be experienced if there is to be power and life resulting in the evangelistic impulse.

It was a differential evangelism that sent Philip out that day in search for Nathanael. He had experienced a change himself. Personal knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth had made him different. He had faith that the same would bring delight to his friend Nathanael. So it proved—the man of the fig tree was convinced. His emotions and sensibilities were captured and released in a new world of faith and hope; and thus learning the Christian conception of God, he went forth with those who had with him found the truth, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS STUDY

1. What method of approach have we to a study of the Evangelism of Jesus?
2. Name the six types to be studied.
3. What is a mystical type?
4. What is the mystical experience?
5. What is a spiritual approach?
6. What is meant by differential evangelism?
7. Was Nathanael a religious man? Characterize him.
8. What did Nathanael find in Jesus of Nazareth?
9. What was Nathanael's threefold experience of reality?
10. What do we mean by personality?
11. What do we mean by a personal God?
12. In what three ways may a personal God express himself?
13. What do we mean by Trinity?
14. Is man a triune being?
15. How may man know a personal God?

There is a distinction which has almost passed into the language of those who discuss the soul, and which was adopted by William James from Francis Newman—I mean the distinction between the once born and the twice born. There are, indeed, three classes—the unborn, in whom the soul has never broken through the life of nature at all; the once born, in whom it has emerged as the upper story of nature, with the skylights turned to the sun; and the twice born, in whom it has not only emerged but, by a crisis, swift or slow, grace has gone to the center of the personality, and sat down on its throne making all things new. Let us keep for our purpose to the other two sorts—the natural man spiritualized and the natural man reborn. Do the twice born form but the upper story of the once born, as these did of the natural man? There is certainly a difference—is it material, or is it a mere matter of degree? Is it a real and serious distinction between the once born, who, cherishing in relation to Christ a sincere but nonmiraculous and indecisive experience (swift or slow,) are content with an experience only sensitive and responsive to the spiritual values preeminent in Him—is there a real difference between them and the twice born, with an inner light which is a power much more than a light, a control more than a radiance, and a conversion which is more than a change—which is a rebirth? Is the difference real between those who feel but the impressiveness of Christ and those who own his regeneration? If the difference is very real, on which does the church and its welfare rest? Allowing that some individuals could not easily class themselves, which would they say was the note and life of a New Testament Church?—*P. T. Forsythe.*



## CHAPTER II

# For an Inquiring Soul

**The Formal Type**

**The Intellectual Approach**

**Essential Evangelism**

**The Conversion of Nicodemus**

**SCRIPTURE : John 3. 1-13**

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

## Prayer

*Our blessed Lord, we would not forget thy presence. Thou hast promised to be with us in all our undertakings. We would not neglect by failing to turn our hearts to thee at the beginning of this hour of study. Give us power of mental application. Furnish us with a motive that will make us delight ourselves in learning more about thee. We are not as those without love for the high things of life. We have a hunger for that which the world cannot give. We know thou hast provided for our love by the beauty in the faces of our friends, by the color of the summer sky, and the mystery of vale and mountain. But these cannot satisfy our souls. We want to be more like thee. We know thou hast provided for our need of pleasurable sounds by the harmonies of sweet songs and the voices of those we love. But these cannot always bring us gratification. We must hear thy voice, or be as those who walk alone, lamenting the absence of a choice companion.*

*Help us to discover in this lesson our true relation to thee. We pray to be delivered from the bondage of sin. We yearn to have the full heritage of the sons of God. Help us not to trust in that which is natural, but to seek always that which is spiritual. Being born from above, by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, we know that old things have passed away and all things have become new. Our joy is that of those who love thee. Our peace and assurance are of those who seek thee in the morning, walk with thee during the day, and rejoice in thy blessed fellowship in the evening. Teach us to live as becometh those who bear thy name. May we find in this hour the dwelling place of light, through Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## Introduction

The evangelism of Jesus for an inquiring soul is illustrated in the conversion of Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees and

a ruler of the Jews. He was of a particular group, known as the formal type, who must always be approached by the way of the intellect. It requires the application of those essential truths without which a man cannot know the God of Jesus Christ, neither live the spiritual life he came to reveal.

Many men come to the enjoyment of the truth through intellectual struggle. Doubts by a strange process obstruct the way of access to the mind. All such men come slowly to the light. They wrestle and suffer. They grope and agonize. They thirst and cry out for the truth that will satisfy them. But the man who comes in the darkness of doubt to obtain the light is always abundantly rewarded. For to doubt is not sinful. It is a state of mind that when based upon a sincere desire to acquire knowledge is commended of God. When it is permitted to become chronic, refusing to accept the truth when presented, it is reprehensible. When it is made an artifice to conceal a sin that the heart has come to love it is to be feared as an enemy of the soul. The inquiring mind, out in the world in search of the great facts of life and human destiny, always commands the respect of Christ. If it is led by doubt in the dark, the lamp it uses will always be held by the hand of faith which ever assures that truth can be found, though the night is on; therefore, faint not in the pursuit. Jesus finds a way to the inquiring soul, over the path of personal responsibility. He directs the truth of the spirit past a man's defenses, past his pretenses to the citadel of his soul. He knows that the human intuitions have power to accredit truth, capture doubt and satisfy the heart. He meets the ruler of the Jews with confidence that he can help him.

## The Formal Type

Nicodemus was of the formal type, which relies on birth and good breeding, on art and education, sacraments and rituals, as sources of moral and spiritual progress. Men of this type trust in nature and the processes of culture to which they may be subjected, to bring those highly capacitated into the kingdom of heaven. They believe that humanity in its upper ranges will inevitably find its way to God. They claim that the soul needs but the external stimulant to bring it forth into the full exercise of its powers; that an improved

social arrangement, a higher environment, are alone necessary to elevate the race, and bring it to its full spiritual capacity. Within their limits these forces are invaluable. However, when they have done their utmost, they leave man inwardly unchanged. To rest human salvation on self-improvement and social reform is nothing more than depending upon the laws of this natural world to redeem sin-crushed and cursed humanity.

The formal type seeks the way to God through intellect, reason laboriously reaching through the darkness; always coming by night, never standing in the open path, never getting any farther than the twilight zone of ritualistic forms and ceremonies. It would satisfy itself with generation, and measure its highest product by a scale of respectability. It would justify itself by the excellence of its moral training. It would make redemption depend upon degrees of cultural attainment, and salvation a matter of preferential faith in Christ. To a formalist in religion the great soul struggles out of which a man emerges a new moral being are a mystery as profound and impossible as a man being born again when he is old. A man of this type cannot be approached by every path. He who would capture him for Christ must find the way over which his soul has gone in its spiritual journey, and, traversing that, reach the sequestered citadel and take it in the name of the higher truth of the Spirit.

## The Intellectual Approach

The intellectual approach was used by Jesus in dealing with Nicodemus. This method appeals to reason and to the knowledge a man already has on the subject under discussion. It seeks to connect his thinking with the new thought under consideration. It refuses to value any appeal to the emotions. Sentiment is carefully rejected. All personal application of the truth, all evidence of soul-searchings, are studiously avoided. This evangelistic method seeks to go straight to the intellectual perception, knowing that where there is honesty and moral rectitude the truth will find its way to the heart. This approach is the most difficult for four reasons: (1) It requires patience. (2) It requires information. (3) It requires familiar knowledge of human nature. (4) It requires persistence, for at the psychological moment the soul

in its sensitiveness to capture may elude its pursuer. Hence it must be conceded that ability to bring a man over the intellectual approach to the acceptance of the profound mystery of the soul life, and to experience its reality, is not to be gained without much diligence and prayer.

## Essential Evangelism

It should be therefore readily seen that the intellectual approach is always used by Essential Evangelism. Non-essentials do not count when an appeal is made to the intellect. It seeks to do the work of laying the foundation of the Christian life deep in the finest faculties of human nature. It seeks to eliminate emotion, to avoid metaphor, to arrive at the last and fundamental thing. It asks, at the final analysis, What differentiates a Christian from the unbeliever? It endeavors to find the essential truth that will make a Christian. What that truth is cannot be told in a passing mood. Only few men can be trusted to make out of it the full form of what Christ meant the spiritual life to be. He answered the question in dealing with Nicodemus, as we shall find in further study, as though he knew that what was essential for one man was not for another, or that behind all men there was a point of truth to which few ever penetrate, where the same action of faith would produce the same results. In this case of the inquiring soul of Nicodemus the essential truth was expressed in the sentence, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven" (see John 3. 3, margin). This is so general a proposition that, when we consider the wide range of the Christian faith and the large number of the essential elements, we find it difficult to articulate and associate it with others in whose light it must be interpreted. Jesus went so far in presenting the essential element of his evangelism in this instance that men have found it a serious task in endeavoring to understand him and to agree to any extent on a common interpretation of his words. And yet, upon a candid consideration of all that he has said, and the teaching of the apostles, at the last analysis we may faithfully and unequivocally avow that the Christian life begins with a spiritual crisis of more or less definiteness, which Christ was pleased to call a birth from above.

## The Conversion of Nicodemus

The conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus, whose inquiring soul sought him in the night, is one of the most thought-provoking incidents in his short career. The ruler of the Jews sought the Prophet of Galilee alone, and when he knew the Master would not be disturbed by the jostling crowd. Personally he was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, a ruler among the Jews, a student, not only of the history of his people but also of the times in which he lived. He was a man with the night lamp. His inquiring mind made him an investigator, a discoverer of moral motive and appreciative of spiritual truth; but it also produced out of him a man of indecision, who could see the truth by night, even midst storm and stress, at his own peril, and still not find conviction enough to rise and stand for it. For this reason he has been called the Hamlet of the New Testament.

In contrast with Nathanael, he was trained and cultured in the ways of men. He rested faith on authority, Nathanael on hope and Scripture. He looked to the past with all its evidence of God's favor; Nathanael looked to the future when the coming of the Messiah would bless his people. He trusted in tradition, believed the words of the prophets could never be surpassed; Nathanael trusted in the fulfillment of the law and the prophets in the glorious day of the Lord. He was a formalist in religion, trusting in the sanctity of burnt-offerings, and the payment of tithe of mint and anise and cummin; Nathanael was a realist to whom the things of God were literally true. He looked for the coming of a kingdom with the return of the glory of the throne of David; Nathanael looked for the coming of the Messiah, who would speak to men's hearts of the majesty and regard of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. While Nicodemus stood in the midst of indecision with the shadows of night falling across his path asking, "What shall I do?" Nathanael arose from his prayers and meditation to ask, "What shall I be?"

Nicodemus was a man of action, strong, impulsive, caught up by the great intellectual problems of life and driven on a shoal. Until he met Jesus of Nazareth he did not think the problems of the spirit were so profound. He grounded on the first question, and could only answer, "How can these things be?"

Nicodemus, a formalist in religion, did not worship God as an individual. He worshiped and prayed according to a form provided for use by all members of his religious group. His was a social or ritualistic religion. The formulas he repeated any man of his group could have repeated. The scripture he recited any man of his station could have recited. The songs he sang and the prayers he offered had been provided by some one else, not for him alone, but for all who believed *with* him. He was unfamiliar with any particular, distinctive, individualistic note that might have been formed out of his own heart need. In his conversation with Jesus he takes three positions:

*First.* He speaks from his social position. "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." In these words is the voice of the religious group to which he belonged. That select body of men, representative of the most conservative interests of the Jewish religion, spoke. He did not speak for himself. He expressed the opinion of his class. "We know"—that was the voice of the Pharisees. Jesus saw him hiding behind the opinions of others. He answered him direct, with an effort to separate him from his class consciousness: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This was more definite—"a man," an individual. That was distinct ground, separate and apart. Would Nicodemus step over and occupy it? Christ meets no man at first on the level of the social group. In this instance the attempted social formula of religion was thrust aside, the individual was pushed to the front: "Except *a man* be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

*Second.* Nicodemus changed the attitude and spoke from his position of authority: "How can a man be born when he is old?" That was the voice of the official man. He spoke from this position as a ruler of the Jews. He had heard the announcement of a new doctrine. It stirred the officer in him, and placed him on his guard. Did he hear a heresy or the vaporizing of an impossibility? The ruler in Israel was not only interested, but aroused in defense of what he had been taught was the truth. He saw himself for the moment as a defender of the faith committed unto Israel. He saw *himself*—that was sufficient.

*Third.* Jesus proceeded with his discourse on individual

salvation until Nicodemus took his third position—that of an individual standing in amazement before the fundamental truth of the spiritual life, namely, the explanation of the birth from above: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The ruler of the Jews shows himself bewildered. As an individual he forgets the members of his class, the Pharisees, and that group of the Sanhedrin among whom he held forth as a reliable leader. He has arrived at his own threshold and stops with what he considered an ultimate interrogative, "How can these things be?" Immediately Jesus pinioned the individual Nicodemus with the direct personal question, appealing to his judgment as a man of wisdom and authority, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" Having brought his inquisitor to the place where he stood alone, apart from his group, Jesus was able to deal with him in the highest interests of his soul.

**The Nicodemus Type of Religion** fails at least at three points:

*First.* At the point of individualism. Men cannot be saved en masse. The kingdom of heaven does not come first in social movement, nor in the perfecting of religious formulas drafted for the use of the multitude, but, rather, in the heart of the individual; for those words of Christ, "The kingdom of heaven is within you," must not be forgotten.

*Second.* At the necessity for regeneration. There is a difference between generation and regeneration. The second cannot be dispensed with by the scientific application of cultural processes. It is a basic, universal necessity. In this position there is a demand to distinguish between that which is of the flesh and that which is of the spirit. Nothing relating to the birth and growth of the body can be adapted to or substituted for the birth of the spirit. These only furnish a capacity which, functioning by faith in Jesus Christ, reach fruition in the spiritual birth.

*Third.* At the point of necessity for a doctrine of salvation for human salvage. By nature a man cannot go back and reconstruct his life. If he wrecks his character and comes to grief, he is denied another chance to rebuild. Where regeneration is denied, degeneration works its rapid processes. A religion that can take the individual after he has sinned

away his youth and restore his powers, enthrone his will, cleanse his affections, and make his entire moral nature react against his past, is of the Spirit and must come from God. The religion Nicodemus professed knew nothing of that life which is born from above. To him it was a profound mystery for which there could be, on the basis of sanity, no satisfactory solution.

**The Reason for the Presentation** of the doctrine of the new birth to Nicodemus is not obvious. He was a patrician among the religionists of his people. As an upright man he represented the highest type of morality and devotion. He was not a profligate and a sinner, whose life was crying out for a new birth. Why did Jesus meet him with this doctrine? Why did he not approach him with a truth similar to that he gave to Nathanael? Nicodemus would seem to be the last man to whom the doctrine of the birth from above would be applicable and fundamental. The answer is direct: Because he trusted in his birth to enable him to inherit the kingdom of God. He was of the sons of Abraham and an heir of the promises. He was a man of position, a member of the party of the Pharisees, and enjoyed a seat among the rulers of his people in the Sanhedrin. Being a child of Abraham, his birth would surely give him a place in the kingdom of heaven. What an illustration of the keen discernment of Jesus in his method of approach! As long as Nicodemus trusted in the merits of his physical birth he could never be brought to see the distinct and supreme value of the birth of the Spirit. Without doubt it was the most essential doctrine for him at that moment.

The disillusionment of a man is not brought about instantly. However, that was what Jesus found necessary in this instance. To convince him that being born a son of Abraham did not count before the demands of the kingdom of heaven meant invalidating the fundamental principle of his faith. With a most positive statement the Master places the spiritual over against the physical birth. "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God" (see John 3. 3, margin). He confronts the man with an inexorable alternative. There is not "either, or." It is one thing or nothing. The spiritual birth is a fundamental absolute. Nicodemus protests, "How can a man be born when he is old?"

Is not one birth sufficient? Does not the physical birth with its property of descent contain the entire destiny of man?

Jesus made a definite distinction: "Except a man be born of water"—physical birth; "Except a man be born of the spirit"—spiritual birth. Flesh is flesh, spirit is spirit. Their origin and operations are separate and distinct. He knew of a life possible to humanity, "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." To think correctly of the kingdom of the Spirit is fundamental, for at this point rests our faith in a natural and a supernatural religion. If we become sons of God by physical descent, then we remove the necessity for a definite spiritual birth. This is consenting to the doctrine that human destiny is contained from the beginning in heredity and environment.

There were five reasons for Jesus laying down this definite and positive doctrine for Nicodemus:

*First.* To him religion was the expression of the highest natural forms of man.

*Second.* To him religion could be explained altogether as the proper unfoldment of the physical life of man.

*Third.* To him the spiritual life could be accounted for by heredity, environment, training, and individual initiative.

*Fourth.* To him the kingdom of God was the reestablishment of Israel.

*Fifth.* To him the kingdom of God was the supremacy of his tribe and the survival of his family.

The doctrine of the spiritual birth carries with it the truth of an invaluable current of heredity, which flows from above, concealed in the life that is hid with Christ in God. The lower stream flows through the individual life from many ancestors, influencing him almost to the elimination of personal responsibility. This is physical. The higher stream is that of spiritual heredity, connecting a man with God, lifting him into the control of forces that come not from beneath but from above, defining personal responsibility and accentuating moral control.

Jesus succeeded in bringing the ruler of the Jews to see his position. It was a revelation, but clear and inexorable. Sons of Abraham by natural generation must be born from above to become the sons of God. This is distinctively Christian. He who has not realized it in his own life stands with Nicodemus, worshiping the God of Abraham, not knowing

the essential difference personal faith in Jesus Christ can make in securing a heritage of sonship with himself in God.

**The Doctrine of the New Birth** has a definite place in the evangelism of Jesus. It has its mystery which can only be reduced by Christian experience. It presents that doctrine of sonship, which remains a matter of controversy, and at the same time claims to be the fundamental distinction of Christ's teaching. Therefore all who would follow him in experience and faith will seek to clearly understand him, lest they fail to enjoy the full light of the truth to which he referred when he said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

In discussing the teaching of the new birth we discover, first, its mystery, and, second, its necessity.

*First*, the mystery of "the birth from above." Its fundamental inference is that flesh and spirit are distinct. One is born from below, and through all the days on earth draws life from that source. To what extent can such a creature become a spiritual being? It is a matter for definition. What distinction can be made between a natural and a spiritual being? Again, we refer to our former definition of personality, and find in that the characterization desired—self-consciousness and self-determination. As far as we are able to tell, man is the only creature on earth manifesting these two characteristics. Inorganic nature has no conscious existence. The plant and the animal have a purely objective life. They have a limited degree of self-activity, but they do not have power of consciously determining their present or future. They maintain themselves and develop by the subjugation of external conditions to the law of their being. Neither of them can know or will its own inner conquest. In the realm of nature man stands apart with this distinction: he maintains and develops himself primarily by the subjugation of internal conditions; that of external nature is secondary. The spirituality of man is manifest in his capacity to plan conscious action which determines his life to-morrow. Upon this basis it is claimed that man, by nature a spiritual being, should not be considered a creature, but a son of God. He was originally created in the image of Deity and after his likeness. Therefore it is claimed that all men are, in a fundamental sense, sons of God. What, then, does Christ mean by stating the

necessity of another birth as conditioning sonship with himself in God? It is a profound mystery. Wherein does Jesus Christ enter into a man's life to make him different from other men? It is thought of, in this instance, in the language of a birth from above.

There is a scientific significance to this phrase that must not be overlooked. "Born from above" expresses the reality of a law of God's universe. Modern science has traced it in many of its applications, but Jesus was the first to mention it. It avows that the different kingdoms—mineral, vegetable, and animal—are closed to each other from beneath; that is, the one below cannot enter the one above. There is no communication, only as life from above descends to that below and lifts it up. Christ had three experiences in which he referred to this law: (1) In his temptation, when Satan suggested, "Turn these stones into bread"—the original reads, "From *above* into bread." Stones cannot be turned into bread any other way. (2) When dealing with Nicodemus, Jesus said, "Except a man be born from *above*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." For the kingdom of man can be entered only from above. Life must come down and lift it up into the spiritual kingdom. (3) In answering Pilate, the Roman procurator, Jesus said, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from *above*" (John 19. 11). Power of control released from above is a mystery to the average man. Yet Christ was conscious of it and walked submissively in the presence of its reality.

His position is based upon this twofold truth: (1) That man by nature has a residuum of spirituality that can be acted upon by life from above, that it represents capacity for spiritual response and can be transformed and lifted into spiritual life, that when the life from above arrives in a man's being it culminates the process by which he becomes a spiritual being, called a son of God. (2) That Jesus himself is that life from above which, if received by faith, produces that inner change in a man's spirit that lifts him into a distinctive life which the New Testament declares is entered by a new birth.

Not only does physical science throw light upon this teaching of Jesus as a mystery and reality, but psychology also lends its assistance. In this field of study it is claimed that man is not a rational creature until in his individual growth

he becomes a self-conscious being. In the first period of his life he is a body of instincts, appetites, and passions. These determine his action and control his volition. They initiate him into life, give him a certain direction, and prepare the way for the higher moral and rational activities. But while the child-man is on this level he is driven practically by the same forces that control in the animal kingdom. It is an automatic form of life with mechanical expressions, that readily pronounce it as not having reached the level of rationality and morality. However, there comes a period in the development of the individual when a new element in his being appears. The age of accountability arrives. The moral will announces itself by asserting control. The self-conscious being seeks to be free and to assert the right of self-direction. The old impulses, appetites, passions, and instincts assert themselves against the demand of moral control. Then appears that inner struggle known to all good men. It is of the very essence of that self-conscious nature to be divided against itself and to win its perfection, its ideals, its freedom, and its harmony as the result of a fierce and protracted internal strife. This is the characteristic of a moral being. Man living on the moral level and maintaining the rational direction of his life finds a continuous conflict of nature with spirit, of impulse with reason, of the lower with the higher self. He is driven to accept the conclusion that for a rational self-conscious being there is no escape from this conflict. However, as years come and go and experience lengthens in a man living apart from Christ, the lower passions, appetites, and instincts become articulate with his moral will by pulling it down from its original high spiritual levels to the place where, though subordinated, they neutralize the struggle against them and function at will.

The foregoing is a characterization of man as he is by nature. What change is brought about when, by the exercise of faith, Christ enters the life? What does he find there? A discord, a conflict, a restlessness, a struggling for mastery on the part of the self against that which is regarded as the "not self," which comes to stand over against the real self, takes on the form of another self, clamors for conscious indulgence, and seeks to draw over into itself from the higher nature a kind of illegitimate right to live. It endeavors to slowly close up the field of strife and articulate freely as

a part of the higher self. At this place in the struggles between man's real self and the control of the self of passions, instincts, and appetites, Christ enters human experience, and the birth from above which makes a man a son of God occurs. Not until a moral conflict is produced, creating within a man a dual consciousness, we call conviction for sin, does Christ have an opportunity to exercise his influence in the life. Not until a man sees, set over against what he is, an unsettling vision of what he can be, are spiritual conditions ready for Christ. When faith acts a new element enters into that struggle: It is not of man. It is of Christ. He completes the division between the two sections of the split personality, sets the man over against his evil self, makes the battle distinct and defines its limits. One great soul, Saul of Tarsus, under his leadership in the midst of such a conflict cried out in memorable words, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then with a marvelous assurance he answered, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Here is the secret of Christ in Christian experience. Christ sets the self-conscious being free from the downward pull of the natural propensities by giving absolute supremacy to the spiritual self. This is the guarantee of primacy and victory which brings joy, comfort, and enlargement for the faculties that make a well-defined spiritual being, who has a right to be called a son of God. Such an experience occurring in the soul must be a conscious one, and is a deliverance like unto the release by birth after the storms and cold of a winter of death.

*Second*, the necessity of the "birth from above" is opposed by those who contend that all men are sons of God by nature. They are born so, remain so, and can never be anything else whether saints or sinners, believers or unbelievers. This displaces the necessity for a spiritual birth and closes those avenues for the soul to reach the higher ranges of spiritual development. This position must be carefully guarded, for the natural unfoldment of the spiritual faculties must not be made to depend upon life from nature, to supply them with power to function, but upon life from above. It must also be emphasized that while religious education, with its training of the faculties and enrichment of the mind, is the ground work of the Christian life and must be accomplished in the days of youth, still the life that functions through the

trained faculties must be of spiritual origin and daily sustained from above. The forms and means of expression afforded by man for the soul's manifestation of itself are under human control, but the life and the nurture that supports it must come from God. When the individual reaches adult life without the influence of religious training having nurtured and developed his spiritual powers, preparing them for the life from above, the provision of a second birth becomes a divine necessity. If this be not true the evangel for the adult life through the doctrine of regeneration ceases to sound. For if there is no possibility of second birth, the man of mature life who has gone away from his Father's house and spent his substance in riotous living cannot hope for regeneration and another chance.

In the light of Christ's teaching, the birth from above must not be disposed of by psychology or a theory of evolution. He is our authority, and we must attend unto what he has to say. He did not hesitate to declare unto a man of proud and cultured birth, "Ye must be born again." He surely meant to teach that there was a particular and unique sense in which men were to become the sons of God. He also leads us to infer that there is an experience produced by a crisis through which a soul passes into the highest possible relationship with God. He repeatedly drew a marked and striking distinction between those who had accepted by faith their sonship in God and those who had not. The difference was so vast as to be that of fundamental nature, similar to the difference between the sheep and the goat. The same position is maintained by Saint John in his Gospel and epistles. He makes a broad, deep, and appalling difference between men who are God's sons by faith and those who are not. Saint Paul repeatedly revealed the fact that he conceived the Christian life as a possibility for mature men through a soul crisis that made a believer in Jesus Christ in a unique sense a son of God. On a scriptural basis we are driven to this position, that to be sons of God we must share the life of God, of righteousness, purity, compassion, holiness, and love. Where these are not, men cannot be considered in any spiritual sense sons of God.

However, independent thinking leads us to inquire further: Is there any appreciable sense in which God is the Father of all men, regardless of their relation to Jesus Christ? Is

this claim based on a certain relative and limited ground? Is it made as a benevolent and superficial generalization based upon sentiment, rather than upon reason and Scripture? If God is the Father of men in a very real sense, then the law of heredity must hold and demand an explanation. If God is the Father of all men, how can we account for the fact that many of his sons are drunkards, habitual liars, selfish, morally coarse, sensual, heartless, and so mean that Jesus when he saw them, said, "They were of their father the devil"? How can we account for the dark vein of heredity in the unregenerate sons of man? Will we hold God responsible for their immoral conduct? Is he the Father of children born with a capacity for sin? To some extent then his Fatherhood is either limited or accommodated.

Again, if the Fatherhood of God covers all men, then we may argue that a son shares his Father's equality. He may even become his superior in strength, intellect, soundness of judgment, and moral goodness. This is the beauty, privilege, and crown of sonship. Can any man, as a son of God, even approach equality with him? In that sense we cannot possibly be his sons. This conception of the Fatherhood of God finds another limitation.

Again, if the Fatherhood of God covers all men, then we may argue that on the basis of nature man does not approach the moral sphere of God, for instance, his highest glory in his moral perfection. Destroy that and you destroy our thought of him. Men may be righteous or unrighteous and still be men; not so with God. Men may be pure or impure and still be men; not so with God. Men may be holy or unholy and still be men; not so with God. Men may be cruel or compassionate and still be men; not so with God. Men may be selfish or unselfish and still be men; but not so with God. Reduce or modify his moral nature and he loses his identity. In our conception of man, morality or immorality does not disturb our fundamental thought of him. What relation, then, can a being so opposite hold to the Moral Ruler of the universe? Can he call him Father when that which makes him distinguishable has so small weight in determining his own being? Upon the basis of nature the Fatherhood of God is a long bridge across a wide chasm, built by man, with no abutment on the other end; for it declares that all men are God's sons, which is realizable only

on the condition of faith as we commonly understand Fatherhood. However, this should be accepted as true, that God is the Father of all men in a potential sense, which may be realized on conditions stated by Christ and recorded in other parts of the New Testament.

In dealing with the soul of Nicodemus, Jesus presented an illustration of essential evangelism. Its fundamental claim is that the spiritual life as a Christian finds it has a definite beginning, and is on a higher level than any life drawing its sources from the physical powers and functions. Its origin is that of a birth. By faith in Jesus Christ believers come into a unique relationship to God in which they may truthfully be called his sons. They come to the enjoyment of a spiritual heredity, and the realization of a consciousness of special favor with God as a sure and fast support.

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS STUDY

1. What is a formal type?
2. What is an intellectual approach?
3. What is essential evangelism?
4. Give three attitudes of Nicodemus toward Jesus.
5. Wherein did the Nicodemus type of religion fail?
6. Why did Jesus present to Nicodemus the doctrine of the new birth?
7. What is the doctrine of the new birth?
8. What is the mystery of the new birth?
9. In what sense is there a reality in the new birth?
10. How does psychology explain the new birth?
11. What happens when Christ enters human experience?
12. Characterize man as he is by nature.
13. In what respect is the new birth a necessity?
14. In what respect are men sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ?
15. In what respect is God the Father of all men?



Grant that Jesus was really God, and everything falls orderly into its place. Deny it, and you have a Jesus and a Christianity on your hands both equally unaccountable; and that is as much as to say that the ultimate proof of the deity of Christ is just—Jesus and Christianity. If Christ were not God, we should have a very different Jesus and a very different Christianity. And this is the reason that modern unbelief bends all its energies in a vain effort to abolish the historical Jesus and destroy historical Christianity. Its instinct is right, but its task is hopeless. We need the Jesus of history to account for the Christianity of history. And we need both the Jesus of history and the Christianity of history to account for the history of the world. The history of the world is the product of that precise Christianity which has actually existed, and the Christianity is the product of the precise Jesus which actually was. To be rid of this Jesus we must be rid of this Christianity, and to be rid of this Christianity we must be rid of the world-history that has grown out of it. We must have the Christianity of history and the Jesus of history or we have the world that exists, and as it exists, unaccounted for. But so long as we have either the Jesus of history or the Christianity of history, we shall have a divine Jesus.—*Warfield.*



## CHAPTER III

# For the Sinful Soul

**The Defective Type**

**The Moral Approach**

**Initial Evangelism**

**The Conversion of the Woman of Samaria**

SCRIPTURE: John 4. 5-42

Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seekest such to worship him.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

And upon this came his disciples, and marveled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

In the meanwhile his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of.

Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat?

Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.

And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

And many more believed because of his own word;

And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

## Prayer

*O Lord, our Christ, we thank thee that thou hast called us to be thy disciples. We know that we are to learn of thee how to live the spiritual life. We confess our ignorance and need of being taught. In this physical world our great problem is, how to adjust ourselves to live in health and happiness. Many perish because they never learn. Thou must be our great Teacher. We have hungers this world cannot supply, appetites and instincts that crave the unseen. Something within us, when we are at our best, cries out for God, the living God. We know what it is to suffer from home-sickness of the soul. Our loved ones go out from us and we yearn to follow them, to communicate with them, until our hearts break with grief. Thou must teach us how to possess our souls in patience and to abide in the assurance of a great faith that love will not lose its own.*

*Help us to understand this world in which we live. Sometimes its wickedness overwhelms us. It seems a low and godless realm that refuses to help men to live at their best, but rather encourages them to live as the beast. Its entire course seems downward, and at times our own feet seem to slip along its way. And yet we know that men find their path to God. That this world was made to develop character and has a great premium on righteousness we cannot doubt. Thou hast taught us the secret of spiritual living, and revealed*

*to us the path of the just, which shineth brighter and brighter even unto the perfect day. Teach us to love this world as thou didst love it. Not to condemn it, and to distrust it, but to regard it, to seek to suffer for it, and to live the sacrificial life in it, for thereby we assist thee in redeeming it. Hold thou the lamp of thy truth before our eager eyes as we study thy Word. Amen.*

## Introduction

In dealing with a sinful soul Jesus became a physician facing a problem of diagnosis. A sick soul must be regarded as a greater reality than a disease-stricken body. For many physical ailments are the result of soul sickness. It is vastly important that in such a case the cause of the sickness be established. To say that it is simply sin is insufficient and frequently erroneous. Indeed, in the light of modern psychology it is sheer folly. There are many kinds of sins that make the soul sick as there are many diseases that prey upon the body. The first great responsibility of a physician of souls is diagnosis. He must believe in the integrity of the soul and the reality of the spiritual life. He must acquaint himself with the powers and normal existence of the soul. He must study a system of treatment for souls diseased. He must familiarize himself with the moods and expressions of the soul that he may readily discern its troubles and intuitively grasp an immediate treatment. Doubtless this will appear as a difficult task. It is a delicate one that is frequently bungled.

In dealing with a sinful woman Jesus found himself confronted by a situation that only a man of his genius could minister unto with any degree of success. Souls when sick become exceedingly sensitive. They hide themselves away. They shield themselves by pretense and defend themselves by prevarication. To gain their confidence and admittance to the inner chamber where they dwell in broken and suffering form requires an art possessed by few men. However, when their fears are allayed, confessions pour forth as the natural expression of the soul, as though in its distress that were the means by which a kind Providence had intended relief should come. The confession of a sin-sick soul in the beginning broke the heart of God, and for that reason he

sent his Son with power to minister and to heal and to redeem men who would place their trust in him. It is with this particular ministry that we come to follow Jesus in this study. The woman of Samaria bore a soul-sickness that made her a social outcast and affords us a subject for the study of the evangelism of Jesus as applied to the defective type.

## The Defective Type

There is a type of humanity that abounds so universally that it must be carefully defined in order to be understood. We shall call it the Defective Type. All men are to a greater or less degree defective, either morally, or physically, or mentally. The physical defective must be dealt with by surgery, medicine, and charity. The mental defective must be studied by the psychologist and given his classification by the alienist. The moral defective may be a problem for state and church, a subject of correction and spiritual regeneration. In this field lies the most serious interest. Moral defect may be congenital. It may be produced. It indicates a lack of moral certainty and poise. By nature it may be a flaw in the personality itself. Such a man cannot see straight morally, cannot make fine ethical distinctions, cannot inwardly respond to high appeal. However, in few, if in any, cases are the elemental spiritual instincts wanting. They require stronger moral stimuli to call them into action and a miracle of regeneration to bring them into recognition and control.

In the matter of moral defects, produced by a man's careless living or intellectual miscalculation, there is a wide range for study. The Holy Scriptures would gather them up under one classification and characterize them as sin. However, Jesus in dealing with them individually always made a distinction, as though he accepted the dictum, "There are sinners, and there are sinners." Individual men are sinners in their own way, and they cannot be wholesaled either into perdition or into the redeemed life. Jesus dealt with them according to the type wherein they were most easily classified; but his own intuitive judgment led him to diagnose each individual case according to the extent and character of moral and spiritual defect. In every instance his treatment is simple, and seems always varied to the limit of inexact form.

## The Moral Approach

In seeking an approach to a sick soul it must always be ascertained whether the ailment is dispositional or physical. Sometimes the trouble may be only of the disposition, and will readily lend itself to correction; but if it has gone on until it has caused physical lesion of some kind, then the task is most difficult. In all cases where the soul-sickness has a physical basis the means of approach must be that which will reach the moral conscience. The approach of the moral judgment and the moral will in every such case will fail. The conscience seeks to control what a man places into action. It, if obeyed, determines the quality of a man's action, the moral judgment of what he thinks, and the moral will of what he executes under pressure of a great decision. When a soul goes wrong, falls and brings upon itself the suffering of a violated conscience, there is but one approach by which it can be reached. That must be regarded as the way over which the consciousness of sin is produced. It is the moral approach because it seeks to bring the soul to a willingness to lay the moral emphasis on the life; that is, to accentuate the sense of right and wrong and exercise the will in drawing the line definitely between that which the conscience condemns and that which it approves. However, when this process begins to operate on a soul there appears resistance and great agitation. Suffering from the wounds conscience has made it seeks to conceal itself, justify its action, and repudiate its past. When lured out of its inner shrine and confidently led to betray itself, the first consciousness it has speaks forth in the words, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not that the Christ?" Over the moral approach the place where a man's life has broken with his past is reached and the entire life passes under the process of redemption.

## Initial Evangelism

It is fundamental that we should understand initial evangelism. It deals with the beginnings of evangelistic procedure. It leads us to inquire as to the first stages of evangelism. Where does it commence? What is it at the last analysis? Where are the lowest levels of its opera-

tions? Can its ramifications be traced back to a fundamental? In its inextricable complexity can it be reduced to a simplicity? What is the initiatory degree from which the full operation of Jesus's evangelism manifests itself? What type of men require initial evangelism? In essential evangelism the fundamentals of the content of a teaching or a doctrine are presented. In initial evangelism not thought, but action is presented. It calls for the first step. It produces reaction to the spiritual command, "About face." It deals with that act which turns the life and faces it the right way. It calls into action the will, producing that experience in the soul known as conversion.

With the morally defective type initial methods are the only effective ones, for the following reasons:

*First.* They go back to the beginning and start a man on another way of living.

*Second.* They apply to the course of a man's doing rather than to his thinking.

*Third.* They articulate a man's past with his present and predict his future, producing a unity of feeling without which a man cannot find God.

*Fourth.* They establish a connection with Christ's transforming power and send the individual forward with newly discovered moral energy.

A thorough application of the methods of initial evangelism guarantees that the individual soul starts his Christian life at the right place. It also brings the assurance that the soul, once securely on the way of Christ, finds a peace and joy, an abundance of life, and a source of abounding spiritual energy that enables faith to bear it up under the most violent attacks of doubt and adversity. Initial evangelism brings a man into the Kingdom of heaven, from the wilds of sin, through the strait gate which marks the place of separation between his past life and that which he is destined to live in and with Christ.

Initial evangelism is confined to the moral approach. Of all advances made upon the soul this is the most direct. It raises intellectual questions only as they are related to action. It does not seek to produce states of mind but of heart. Its purpose is to lead to the capture of the citadel of the affections. It works upon the understanding that moral impressions survive only as they are accentuated with definiteness.

That they must be more than thought, they must become experience, for it is the nature of thought to be static; it is that of experience to be dynamic. At the last analysis, it is avowed, the initial step in the evangelism of Jesus is a moment when there is a surrender of will, a renunciation without reserve of what has been cherished and valued, issuing into an habitual and joyous self-denial. For there is an experience without which no man can be a Christian. There is an hour of awakening in which the spiritual world becomes a supreme reality. The moral approach produces that hour. Here the method is not slack, but stringent; delicate, but always courageous. It awakens the soul by creating feeling. It antagonizes and soothes; it encroaches and ambuscades. It forces a surrender by the inexorable alternative—Christ or Despair.

### The Conversion of the Woman of Samaria

In dealing with the woman of Samaria, Jesus used the methods of initial evangelism. She was a woman rated as a typical sinner. Iniquity had made her a social and religious outcast. She was unlike Nathanael in that her inner life had been reduced almost to the point of extinction. She had forgotten the places of prayer and meditation. They were to her a hazy memory. She had forsaken the ties that bound her to her father's family. She was a moral derelict. She was also of an opposite type from Nicodemus. She could not speak for her group, for her kind, for her class. She could not voice a note of authority, nor speak of any associated life until Jesus touched her. The only expression she could make was that of her prejudices and ill feeling. She stood apart and alone, without any perceptible affiliations aside from those who were companions with her in sin. Nicodemus valued his birth and position; these were as naught to her. Family name and good heredity had small place in her thought. Her life of moral carelessness had robbed her of her social rating. She was an outcast and valueless.

She needed to have four things done for her:

*First.* She had divorced her past, no longer recalled it. She must realize it as an indispensable part of her life. For Christian salvation demands that a man shall accept his past,

and with it, through faith in Christ, build an upright character. For men and women, to be able to see where they are going they must realize from whence they came.

*Second.* She must be brought to revalue her relation to the social and religious groups. An unrelated individual cannot enjoy the favor of Christian fellowship. There are groups of devotion and prayer which are of incalculable value. There are lines of birth and ancestry that relate individuals to a definite past, and furnish supports for the future which are indispensable to moral and intellectual integrity.

*Third.* She must be brought to ground her faith in the spiritual hope of Israel. On this rested the foundation of the religious life of her people. She must be brought back to it and upon it begin the building of her future life.

*Fourth.* She must be brought to realize that hope in Jesus of Nazareth.

**Only a Man of Delicate Sensibilities** could have crossed the distance that separated the soul of the woman of Samaria from the Hope of Israel. As a wrongdoer, moral sensitiveness was keen and combative. Four almost insurmountable prejudices surrounded her, which Jesus overcame:

*First.* As a woman, he met the barrier of sex prejudice. He could not without difficulty, as a stranger, speak to her in a public place.

*Second.* As a Samaritan woman, he met the wall of race prejudice. He could not approach her with any greeting, for the Jews had nothing to do with their Samaritan cousins. He could not with propriety even speak to her. To ask a favor was an offense.

*Third.* As a poor woman, he met the distance of social prejudice. It was a matter of condescension for a self-respecting man to stoop to speak to a woman without social rating and moral value. She would resent it perchance as an insult.

*Fourth.* As a fallen woman, he met deep and ingrained moral prejudice. When men and women are in wickedness, they think other people are seeking the same thing as themselves. The pure seek their kind, and the same thing may be said of the impure. It is a delicate and perilous thing for a good man to approach a fallen woman even with good intentions. Moral prejudice is sensitive and recalcitrant, fre-

quently causing trouble where only good should appear. It is too often supported by a narrow religious prejudice that fears and dreads in the spirit of the Pharisee, who thanked God that he was not as other men are.

In seeking to surmount these four prejudices, Jesus displays a knowledge of the soul seldom possessed by men.

He overcame *sex prejudice* by approaching her with a human frankness, and not turning his back on her, refusing to speak because she was a strange woman. Social formality on some levels of life is resented with bitterness. Confidence, openness, broadmindedness always are welcomed. They are human. Jesus spoke to her though a stranger.

Before his need *race prejudice* vanished. He asked her, a Samaritan woman, to do him a kindness, give him to drink. It had been the habit of a Samaritan when a Jerusalem Jew asked bread to give him a stone. Hence, few favors were expected. He asked a cup of water, threw aside any prejudice he might have had, and found a ready response from her.

He entered into conversation with her and banished *social prejudice*. He was willing to show her consideration. Socially she might have been different, but she was a human being. She knew the pangs of hunger and the enjoyment of friendship. She would not permit her prejudice to close her heart against anyone who was frank and kind in word. Her retort, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" That was sensitive and ingrained prejudice, but it was frank, and free from deceit. It revealed the very inner chamber of her heart. All Jesus wanted was a heart opening. He knew how to gain entrance.

Still another *prejudice* remained—that of *morality and religion*. The heart-door stood ajar. A woman's heart is always responsive to curiosity. He touches that instinct, "If thou knewst the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked him, and he would have given thee living water." That was sufficient. The hurt of sin had been exceedingly painful, but this dealing of sympathy won its way. The woman's prejudices were gone, and she was ready to listen to him with profound sympathy.

While Jesus was gaining her attention, he was also making

his approach into her heart. This was accomplished by three direct appeals:

*First.* An appeal to her sense of God—"If thou knewest the gift of God." The value of this appeal in dealing with men and women in sin should be regarded as fundamental. The moral sense of God is ineradicable. It will arrest attention, quiet combativeness, and start the higher impulses quicker than any other appeal. The soul in sin loses its power to react to all other moral values, but never to the thought of God.

*Second.* An appeal to her sense of mystery—"If thou knewest who . . . it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink." The mystery of the Man speaking aroused that strange power in her soul called wonder. This spreads like a warm atmosphere through the nature, dispelling all coldness.

*Third.* An appeal to an inner impulse.—"Thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water"—an impulse to experience the drinking of a new water. Truth is of small value to the soul unless with it can be aroused an impulse to experience it.

Jesus was a master psychologist, as though he read at first hand the directions to the inner shrine of a human soul. The water in Jacob's Well was valued by all the people of the land. It was one of the sacred show places. Blessed was he who had drunken of its waters. Jesus held up in contrast his wonder water. He characterized it as living water. It produced four unique effects in those who drank it:

*First.* It slakes the thirst so that one drinking it never thirsts again. Wonder of wonders to people living in a country where water supply is short and uncertain!

*Second.* It is an inner well. Strange mystery! Mystical fact wrought in a sense of reality! Wonder water that only the camel of the desert can appreciate.

*Third.* An inner well of water, springing up, maintaining an inner freshness of life, for which all sensible men pray.

*Fourth.* An inner life of freshness, which expresses itself in outer, immortal youth—"springing up into everlasting life."

This was surely enough to stir the woman's thirst for a water Jacob's Well could not give, and for a life that did not come from his line. She is ready to receive what Jesus has

to give. "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Having reached the inner circle of her being, Jesus now has opportunity to touch the sin that has caused her alienation from God. He may now safely command her to obey him in a matter for further information. He saith unto her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." For when one meets Christ, the entire life must be brought up, the past as well as the absent present. In the thought of a husband rested a darkness she did not care to reveal. She answered, shortly, "I have no husband," no doubt thinking that would end it. But Jesus, with keen insight replied, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." The realities of the woman's life were laid bare. They were facts of shame, from which she shrank with a consciousness of weakness and condemnation. She recovers through the feeling that he, a stranger, could not know them without being a prophet. She answers, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." And introduces a subject for discussion. "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." With Nicodemus, the subject for discussion was the new birth; with the woman of Samaria it is the place of worship. To a Samaritan no question could be more worthy of a prophet's decision than the settlement of the religious center of the world. Thus the difficulty which is proposed is not a diversion, but the natural thought of one brought face to face with the Interpreter of the divine will. It led away from personal consideration. It drew her in line with the fathers, and expressed a realization of the race consciousness that would loose the individual and his need to further consideration. When Jesus answered, he uses "Father" as over against her word "fathers," and brings the thought back to the individualistic level. "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." Then he launches into a discussion of worship that carries her beyond her intellectual depths. He eliminates the disputed question of worship, but emphasizes the fact that "salvation is of the Jews," and assures her that the "true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Then, passing from the idea of worship to that of God, he declares: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The woman is bewildered, cannot follow him further, and throws herself back on the hope of her people, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things." That was the goal toward which Jesus had been moving. They had arrived. Her heart was open. Hope ready to welcome, faith waiting to receive. He replied, "I that speak unto thee am he." The surprise, the confession of faith, the joy of the woman's heart are lost to the reader; for at this point the disciples arrive from their visit to the city to purchase provisions. The woman departs with this resolve, to bid the people "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" She had found Him "of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And with Nathanael she could say, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

In Jesus's dealing with this woman of sin there are at least three things that must be dwelt upon:

1. He does not mention sin. He makes no effort to trace it down and condemn it. He simply opens the life, knowing that when the higher instincts are released they will furnish motive for conscience to do its work of condemnation and correction.

2. He does not offer God's plan for dealing with sinful souls. Why did he not mention the doctrine of the new birth? If any one with whom he had to deal needed to be born from above she was that one. Upon thought the answer is obvious. He could not talk to her about the new birth: First, because the family meant nothing to her. Second, because it was along the line of the family that lay her great offense. She had blasted the purpose of the family. She had misused the birth function until it had no high meaning for her. The holiest thing in a woman's life is power to give life. The love of one man makes the birth of a child a function presided over by Deity, and the one cherished as of the most precious value. But for her the conception of birth carried no spiritual content. Jesus could not lead her to realize the Gospel of the Kingdom through the doctrine of the new birth.

3. He brings the woman where he can reveal to her the fulfillment of the hope of Israel—the promised Messiah. In doing this his evangelistic method supports the statement that Christ the Messiah is central in all evangelistic effort. No matter what other interests may arise, or doctrine demand discussion; no matter how far distant the soul may be—the way upward is not struck until Christ is reached. He occupies a unique centrality, past which all souls must go on their quest of God the Father. It is based on a previously stated truth, that He is the expression of the emotional life of a personal God. He is the Divine, manifesting himself as mercy and love. The full measure of his life is found in the words, "God so loved." In this respect he is Deity. There was a cause for this manifestation of Holy love. It must have been more than that which would demand affection. It was a necessity, that required action, vigorous, full expression of itself, love for an object that would perish without it. That condition was a state of sin into which the sons of men had passed, and from which they must be saved by a quickening of faith in God. Christ came in Jesus of Nazareth, that men might have a manifestation of the heavenly Father. Without that manifestation they have nothing on which to place their faith. Christ, then, was manifest to requicken the lost power of faith. It is the means of salvation, not because all others have failed, but because it is the only one and never fails. It brings this assurance, that he who, on account of his sins, cannot render unto God the full obedience of faith, is by what faith he has identified with Christ, who is the righteousness of God for sinful men, and he receives through this identification the increasing power of sonship. With the woman of Samaria we come to stand at the same place as with Nathanael and Nicodemus—Christ, the manifestation of God, without the higher life of Sonship, finds no human realization. There is no Divine sonship for man apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

**Jesus, in His Evangelistic Approach**, works upon a clearly defined conception of sin. To him there were degrees of distance from God, but all men were more or less alienated from him by wrongdoing. In dealing with the woman of Samaria he had almost unsurmountable barriers to overcome. The course of action he adopted was simple, and his direct

dealing has been the wonder of men from that day to this. How did he seem to conceive of men as being in sin? He made two classifications. To him men were either good or bad. He knew no medium ground where a man was morally colorless. To him sin was not a matter of degrees. It was a disease. He likened it unto leprosy. A man is a leper if he has one gerin of that dread disease in his blood. It is not a matter of the extent to which it has worked its ravages. Some men are so morally inactive, so void of positiveness, so poised in self-control, so hedged about by respectability, so eminently self-contained that they seem a problem of classification. They appear to be neither good nor bad. They are not righteous, neither are they iniquitous. They are not good enough for heaven, neither are they bad enough for hell. The modern man is prone to make a third classification for these men, and claim for them some kind of a special judgment at the end.

It is well for us to remember that there are three kinds of sinners, and that all must be saved through faith in Jesus Christ:

*First.* Sinners of the passions and appetites of the flesh. Among these should be classed the woman of Samaria. We have no difficulty in dealing with those of this color. We can quickly dispose of them. Drunkards, and harlots, and adulterers, and gluttons, and winebibbers easily find their classification. Without hesitancy we call them sinners, who need to be saved by faith in Christ. There can be no room for doubt here.

*Second.* Sinners of disposition. Among these Nicodemus finds his place. He was a man of pride and personal exclusiveness. He was set about by race and religious prejudices, all based on the inner consciousness that he was of the ruling class of Israel. A dispositional sinner may be free from all perceptible sins of the flesh. He may walk circumspectly before men. He may be as upright as society requires of its most trusted citizens, but on his dispositional side all wrong. He is cross and violent at times, showing what is in him when he loses control of himself. He is hard and pharisaical in dealing with his brothers, but he never becomes drunken and shocks his neighbor's moral sense. He never consorts with harlots and vicious men. And yet he is a sinner who needs Christ to save him from bigotry,

hardness, and a godless life just as much as some out-breaking sinner who disturbs the community with his wrongdoing.

*Third.* The mystical sinners. Among these may be classified Nathanael, the guileless one of the fig tree. These men, as far as personal morals are concerned, are flawless. They are without sin. They pray. They meditate. They shut themselves up to spiritual experiences. They claim great moments with God. They have a wonderful testimony of his revelation of himself to them. They become other-worldly. They come not to love the world nor the things of the world. They know not of its wickedness, neither of its sorrow. They go their way, inwardly rejoicing that they are not as other men are, and their guilelessness becomes their condemnation; for a man reaches the holiness that pleases the God of our Lord Jesus Christ not by guilelessness alone, but by a life that renounces its past and goes forth into a field of action and ministry. How would Nathanael have fared on that way with his religion of meditation? The royal way of the cross, the way that Jesus trod, is the only one that leads man home to God. He fell on that way thrice beneath the burden of his cross. He continued unto the end, and drank the dregs of the cup of bitterness. It was the way of Him who said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

**It Is the Purpose of Initial Evangelism** to start every soul at the right place. The failure of Samaritan religion, as this woman at the well of Jacob seemed to understand it, was at four points:

*First.* It was provincial. It provided for the Samaritans' wants. Kept them in mind in all operations of Providence.

*Second.* It was hedged about by prejudice. We have nothing to do with the Jerusalem Jews. If Jehovah is to be our God, he must come to us. We will not go to Jerusalem.

*Third.* It located God—"worshiped in this mountain": as those who say God is in a prayer book, in a certain particular kind of offering, in this creed, in this phylactery, in this kind of an experience, in this church, in this denomination, in this nation. This is Samaritan religion.

*Fourth.* It had no objective element. The question of wor-

ship was its large problem for the prophets to pronounce upon. The most outstanding impression Jesus of Nazareth made on the woman of Samaria, indeed, the one that convinced her that he was the Christ, was the fact that he told her all that she ever did.

Christianity is a religion of doing. It demands for itself a place to begin. Its starting is not hazy and indefinite. It requires the open world for its realization. When men hear of a religion based upon faith they prepare to give it room to work its way out in human relations. For faith controlling a man presupposes ability to seize opportunity for achievement, before which others are impotent.

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS STUDY

1. What is a defective type?
2. What is a moral approach?
3. Characterize initial evangelism.
4. What four things did the woman of Samaria need to have done for her?
5. What four prejudices stood between the woman and Jesus? How did he overcome them?
6. What three direct appeals did Jesus make to her?
7. Characterize the "living water" of Jesus.
8. In Jesus's dealing with the woman, what three things must not be forgotten?
9. Why did Jesus fail to give this woman the truth of the new birth?
10. Name the three kinds of sinners?
11. What was Jesus's conception of sin?
12. Where does initial evangelism begin?
13. How near did Jesus bring this woman to discipleship?
14. What was the deepest impression Jesus made upon her?
15. What did the woman of Samaria find in Jesus of Nazareth?



The foes of Christianity, seeing only the restraints and restrictions imposed on the individual, seeing only in the teaching of Christ the antithesis of their ideal of boundless individual expansion, have entirely neglected to take into account the social significance of such restrictions. We must never neglect to consider the double aspect of Christianity as an instrument at once of social and of individual development. We must not neglect to consider the rights and duties recognized by Christianity as appertaining alike to society and to the individual. Only when we consider it as realizing an equilibrium between social and individual interests can we hope to judge rightly of its value.—*Chatterton-Hill.*



## CHAPTER IV

# For the Importunate Soul

**The Afflicted Type**

**The Physical Approach**

**Collective Evangelism**

**The Conversion of Blind Bartimæus**

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10. 46-52

And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

## Prayer

*We thank thee, O Lord, that thou dost hear the prayer of a sincere and upright heart. We know that when we come to thee, earnestly seeking thy forgiveness and the strengthening of our moral purpose, thou wilt not fail to*

attend unto the voice of our prayer. We rejoice in this assurance. It gives us boldness to enter into thy presence and to ask for those things needful to make us more like Christ. We do not always possess a fullness of the spirit of devotion. At times we pray with our lips, repeating words that carry little meaning and no desire of soul on our part. Our hearts fail to respond to the call of the Spirit. They are listless, cold, and turn toward other things. In such an hour thou hast taught us that the heart does not control, but rather the will. Then we call resolution to command our souls to worship thee, and sincerely come into thy presence with a perceptible desire for thee, knowing that thou dost love and accept those who command themselves for thee.

We confess our devotion does not depend upon mood or sentiment. We will to do thy will, for thou hast given us power of self-direction and self-control. We would hesitate to acknowledge that our love for thee rested on emotion and sentiment; these are but expressions of our regard for that which is thine. Moreover, we are such creatures of feeling that our physical moods often rest upon us like heavy burdens. They bear down upon the spirit until we are compelled to cry aloud unto thee as though thou didst not hear us. We thank thee that for such an hour thou hast given us the prayer of importunity, that will not be discouraged, that gathers force, that cries out, "I will not let thee go till thou dost bless me." Wilt thou further teach us the secrets of the spiritual life, and in this hour direct our thought along the paths of truth that lead to Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## Introduction

The previous incidents in the life of our Lord, studied for their evangelistic content, present three persons seeking intellectual enlightenment as an answer for their soul-hunger. He impressed each one of them differently, and yet brought them back to confession of himself as the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel. He made a distinct impression on each one: the first, a spiritual; the second, an intellectual; the third, a moral impression. Through these the soul was touched and the great truth of God in Christ became a reality. In this chapter Jesus will be seen approaching the soul through a physical impression. It is a case of crucial evangelism as related to

the individual and collective evangelism as to demonstration of method.

## The Afflicted Type

There has always been a class of men who may be called the afflicted type. They are incapacitated by physical affliction. Most men are at times members of this group, for afflictions overtake each of us before our life's journey is ended. We must be prepared to understand why it is so. Our faith must be ready not only to support but direct through such experiences. However, the afflicted type is the one presenting an age-long problem. Why do we have physical deformities and infirmities? This has been a question of moral philosophy and theology since man began to think about himself and God. The students of physiology in producing the science of human anatomy have contributed much toward a solution of the problem. Physical afflictions have been accounted for within the physical life, some as malformation, some as congenital defeat, and some as hereditary predisposition. The Christian thinker may stand near and ask, "Why are men so afflicted if there is a wise and beneficent God?" The answer has always been, "Neglect or willful violation of God's natural and spiritual law." He has not been able to determine where responsibility rests, neither the degree of culpability. Sometimes the words of Christ confront him with an inscrutable situation, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents," as though there were times when it is unfilial to raise the question. For it is a fundamental of the Christian faith that disease and suffering may find their origin apart from moral conduct. Natural science has produced the germ theory of disease and answered an age-long question: Some afflictions do come from sinning against God's laws. However, let us not forget it, as many do. What then is God going to do with affliction in his universe? Has he a remedy? Is it permanent or subject to alleviation and final elimination? Must the afflicted type remain to mar and destroy his creation, which he said at the beginning was altogether good? Rather, it affords a continuous opportunity for him to work with remedial methods the perfection of his handiwork. Indeed, we are driven to receive this as a part of our faith if we believe in the Fatherhood of God. He is here working

with the breakdown of his children. He has a ministry of healing and restoration going on without interruption. If not, then our faith is in vain and our hope a deceit and a rebuke.

## The Physical Approach

The easiest way to reach the soul of a man afflicted by any disease or infirmity is that of the physical approach. The habit of Jesus was to preach and at the same time heal. He understood that a ministry of physical healing opened the way for a spiritual ministry that could be gained by no other method. It was also his faith that man dwells in a body which is so intimately identified with his soul-life that it must be taken into account in all spiritual dealing. His example should teach us that the human body, not less than the human soul, is God's creature, therefore in itself good. To it evil is an accident, an incident. It is capable of being delivered from many afflictions, which do so easily beset it. Indeed, Jesus exalts the body in which we dwell, and leads us to believe it is destined to give form to that incorruptible and glorified body to be raised in the last day beyond the reach of disease and death. In fact, it is with this thought in mind that all our modern ministries are supported. The constantly increasing fight of organized Christianity for the alleviation of physical suffering, whether of poverty or disease, is based upon our faith in the redemption of the body as well as that of the soul. This is a distinctively Christian idea, and must be given a proper place in thought. The attitude of the Christian religion toward the material side of man stands in strange contrast with that of paganism, which looked upon the body as sinful and altogether evil. Jesus made his ministry of healing a parable of the spiritual life. Each one led to some truth about the soul. Indeed, none but those who are dull of understanding could imagine that their Benefactor meant them to go home and enjoy their restored health without a thought of anything higher. It is altogether within the range of probability that the majority of those Jesus healed entered into the new life, for somehow he impressed them that physical healing was not an end in itself, but a summons to moral reconstruction.

The physical approach used by Jesus in the story of blind Bartimæus led at once to a spiritual ministry, in which the man walking in darkness became a follower in the way and a witness of his healing power.

## Collective Evangelism

There is a familiar form of evangelism which moves men en masse. It is popular because it appeals to man's group instincts. It may, for convenience, be called collective evangelism. It has been the most common form of revivalism in operation for over two centuries. Indeed, it has not been out of use since the day of Pentecost and the time when Peter baptized Cornelius at Cæsarea, and later received on confession the rest of his household as members of the Christian faith. It has received the sanction of the church because in it has been manifest the leadership of the Holy Spirit. In it was born the Protestant Reformation under Luther, and every great religious movement since. It originates in an accentuation of evangelistic preaching, which directs its appeal to men not as individuals, but in mass. It utilizes the methods of indirection, releases spiritual power, creates an atmosphere that pervades the mental life of the community, until the moral and spiritual emphasis cannot be resisted. Conviction for sin comes to rest upon the most indifferent, producing violent opposition in some and quick surrender in others. This is the most successful method of dealing with adult life. Many men would never find Christ, and the forgiveness and regeneration he is able to give, but for the crisis produced in their lives through the powerful preaching of a leader in a collective evangelistic campaign. If we search for an explanation of the marvelous working of collective evangelism, we will find the human side of it in crowd psychology. Experience has taught us that men do not to any perceptible degree shape their conduct upon the teaching of pure reason. The influence of laws and institutions and customs is found to be slight upon them, when studied in the light of crowd psychology. They seem powerless to hold any opinions other than those imposed upon them. They are unable to surrender themselves continuously to activities based upon theories of pure equity. They must be impressed by the will of their group and seduced by the

appeals of the opinions of the community. They seem unable to undertake independent, individual action. They walk and live under the influence of the collective mind. If they are to be reached for moral reconstruction and spiritual regeneration, those who approach them must know the operation of the psychological law of the mental unity of crowds.

However, in this evangelistic form lies a constant peril to the individual. Men cannot be saved in groups, or masses, or crowds, or communities, as Charlemagne inflicted baptism on the Saxons. Christian salvation begins with the individual by ministering to his infirmities, healing his diseases, and making him a new creature in Christ. If, therefore, he joins the Christian community and remains the same man he was before, he has missed the most vital thing promised men through faith in Christ. The first step in the Christian life is toward Christ, not toward the company following him. He was sent among men to heal their infirmities, to make of them new creatures. If among those accompanying him and bearing his name is one, unchanged, with a diseased mind and an afflicted body, his presence is a reflection rather than a witness to Christ's power to heal and save. For New Testament salvation is individualistic and then afterward socialistic. Each man must meet Christ first with repentance and acknowledgment of sin, and then through the exercise of faith accept him as a personal Saviour, who gains for him forgiveness and works within him regeneration.

### The Conversion of Blind Bartimæus

In the healing and conversion of blind Bartimæus we have, on a small scale, an illustration of peril to the individual, of mass enthusiasm working discipleship. Jesus was on his way toward Jerusalem. Great crowds of people from the Diaspora were joining his company and proclaiming the Prophet of Galilee the promised Messiah. A great wave of popular enthusiasm was bearing him along for his triumphal entrance into the Holy City. Scarcely a man could resist the contagion. It was spreading, infectious and powerful. The influence of the crowd was overwhelming, and as it surrounded the Christ, sweeping him along the highway, the individual was lost in the collective spirit that prevailed. Bartimæus sat by the wayside begging. In his experience at

that moment arose one of the greatest problems with which Christianity has to deal in propagating the spiritual life—that of first saving the individual and afterward making him a part of the crowd.

**In a Great Mass Revival** there are always three things to be taken into account—the crowd, the preacher and his message, and the individual needs.

The influence of the crowd must be reasoned with. It is fundamental, for when religious impulses take hold of groups of men they are prone to crush the individual under the burden of the mass, the result being the destruction of his higher spiritual sensibilities. It has been proven that many religious beliefs have a social origin. In pagan lands, as well as in the life of primitive man, religion was imposed. The individual was forced to accept. He could not resist, no matter how opposed he might be, for the collective mentality of his tribe forced upon him a religious faith that was born, not of any need he might personally feel, but from the social necessities. He could not exist outside nor live independent of society, therefore he must subordinate himself to its demands upon him to become a part of it. A religion engendered by nature has no place for individual salvation. It says the needs of the larger group come first. For the individual to assert himself is unadulterated selfishness and highly reprehensible. Considering the good of all, the social needs come first. What are these constituent elements of society to which all others must be subordinated? The sociologist names them, social unity, social cohesion, and social integration. In maintaining these religion is an indispensable influence, in that it restrains individual liberty and subordinates him to the interests of the continuity of social existence. Obviously, religion centers its power in the crowd. It places great and powerful restrictions and restraints on the strongest individual instincts. Among pagan peoples a man fails to find his religious faith a source of consolation. It is a cause of perpetual anguish, a never-ceasing impeachment; a source of endless, irksome restraint; a cause of incalculable terror, and constantly produces misery and dread. And yet, as a social force, religion is an absolute necessity. Men cannot live together in groups without it.

Here, then, is an irrepressible conflict. The spiritual

nature of the individual must be ministered unto. Religion should furnish him consolation and comfort. He has need of moral regeneration, and a source of power to supply him with an unfailing reserve of moral motive. He lives in a world of struggle and conflict. He can survive only when his spirit finds the hidden sources of reaction against his opposition. He is preyed upon by disease and is the subject of weariness and worry. He has soul-hungers and elemental instincts that make him restless and sick of heart. Religion must somehow minister unto him. His needs must be taken into account and provided for, else he perish, for the body of society is composed of individual elements. When they are neglected and remain undeveloped the level of paganism prevails. If the individual and social interests are always opposed, a religion of divine origin will find a way to reconcile them. It is at this point that the uniqueness of Christianity appears. It has proven that while remaining true to its fundamental function as a religion, of assuming social integration and cohesion, it also becomes a source of unequaled consolation and inspiration for individual distress and weakness and stands unrivaled as an influence to maintain hope in the heart, comfort in the soul, and to generate power of reaction in the will against the perversity of a harsh and merciless world.

In thinking of religion, as well as the salvation offered by Christ, we must not neglect to consider this double aspect of Christianity as an instrument of social and individual development. Only as we think of our religion in this respect, as realizing an equilibrium between social and individual interests, can we hope to have any appreciable understanding of it.

The evangelistic value of these fundamental truths is found in the fact that men as individuals during a great religious mass movement become lost in the crowd, surrender to the superheated atmosphere then prevailing without becoming familiar with the principles and convictions that dominate the group. Men give themselves to the control of the emotions that pervade a mass revival and remain strangers to the fires of its passion. Crowd enthusiasm does not produce moral regeneration, neither does it generate the spiritual life. A man may join those following Jesus and remain deaf and dumb, or maimed and halt and blind. The only surety for

the blind man by the wayside is to refuse to heed the crowd, push forward to the Christ for his healing, then fall in and follow him on the way.

**Bartimæus, the Wayside Beggar, Resisted the Crowd** and found the Christ who healed him of his blindness. He was a representative of that type of manhood needing a threefold salvation.

*First.* He needed a physical salvation. His blindness limited his world of thought and action. He was deprived of one of the most indispensable physical senses. All the beautiful world of God's creation was unknown to him. The enlargement of intellect that comes from acquaintance with the faces of men and the expression of their emotions was not permitted him. He could not understand the world as other men did. His dependence upon others for guidance lest he stumble and fall, lest he lose his way, discouraged the spirit of independence within him, and made a beggar of him, not only by practice, but in heart.

*Second.* He needed a social salvation. As a solicitor of alms he was a social outcast. He was a nonproducer and a liability. He was compelled to live off the labor of others, and survive by an appeal to pity. As such he became a menace to society. He needed to be restored to a position of self-support, to social and physical health. As long as he remained among the waste products of society any kind of religion that he might possess would be valueless. Religion means moral circumspection, which in turn demands a social rating, and never fails to gain power and place for self-support and personal initiative.

*Third.* He had need of moral salvation. He was without any personal merit because he could in no sense depart from himself and live his life for others. He may have been good because of lack of opportunity to be wicked. He was morally negative, he must be made positive. He had lost his power to get on in the world. He sat by the wayside, listening to others go by in pursuit of wealth, health, and happiness. He was located by the side of the road of progress and growth because he could not see. If religion had any consolation and help for an individual sorely afflicted, blind Bartimæus was the man who sorely needed its offices.

He had heard of the wonderful healing ministry of Jesus

of Nazareth. Rumor had borne to him the reports of the leper being healed, of the lame man being restored, of the deaf being made to hear and the dumb to speak, of the blind being restored to sight. If Jesus of Nazareth ever came his way, he would have his chance. That day came. He sat by the wayside. The noise of a great company approaching came upon his ears. Upon inquiry he learned that Jesus of Nazareth, with a large procession of people, was passing. He was thrown into a mental crisis. It was his crucial hour, an opportunity which if not seized at once would be lost. How could he reach Jesus through the multitude? Would he dare stir that group unity? Could he disturb the cohesion of the procession and embarrass its progress? He rose to his feet and cried out mightily, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." Then appeared the influence of the crowd. His interests seemed at once in conflict with those of the great company. It sought to suppress him. Why should he thrust his own selfish demands upon the hero of that hour? Why should he break the unity and continuity of the enthusiasm that bore the mass of people along to Jerusalem? Only one individual counted at that moment. He was Jesus of Nazareth. Many charged the blind man to hold his peace. He was in bad form. He was out of order. He could have joined the crowd, lost himself in its enthusiasm, followed in the way, participated in the glad acclaim of the new Prophet, and have caused no trouble. But he needed to see Jesus himself. He must have his eyes restored. Resisting the will of the crowd, he cried "the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me." It was a moment of desperation. The impulses of the crowd opposed him. They demanded that he fall in and quietly follow in the way. But his blindness was his great need. He must see Jesus or walk in darkness the rest of his life. Would he in his blindness join the crowd or the Christ? The more they charged him to hold his peace the more he cried out, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me." It was Jesus the man wanted, not the crowd. He compelled attention. "Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called." Then they beckoned the blind man, trying to quiet him, saying, "Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth for thee." Then, with remarkable dramatic action, "he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus." The individual and Jesus met.

Affliction was brought to the Physician, and blindness to the Great Oculist. With wonderful compassion Jesus inquired, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" The blind man answered in pathetic submission, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." He had resisted the crowd and found the Christ, who replied, "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." And "immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." On his march with the great company of people to Jerusalem, Jesus had become the Christ to him. He had met Jesus personally and the Lord had done something for him. He had answered his one great need. He had experienced a transformation in his life that was at once a miracle and attestation of the supernatural power of Jesus the prophet of Galilee. The enthusiasm of the crowd was his because he had evidence in his own life that made him glad and released him into a new world. What if he had obeyed the voice of the multitude rather than his impulse to seek Jesus for personal healing?

**Two Final Questions.**—Two important questions face the student of this incident: First, How far can a blind man follow Jesus and continue to be blind? that is, How far can a man seem to follow Christ without being rid of the sins and infirmities which he came to relieve? Second, How is an individual after personally finding Christ going to adjust himself to live his spiritual life within the group life of Church membership? For no man follows Christ alone. There is no lovers' lane over which a man may go alone with those he holds in his heart. He must join the company of those following Jesus to the heavenly city, and be a witness to what has been done for him.

The healing ministry of Jesus of Nazareth came first in his dealing with many men. It was, however, always secondary; a means to an end. This fact must not be overlooked by his followers, for in so doing they will lose one of the strongest and most indispensable elements of his teaching and ministry. If he healed the body when on earth, how far should our faith follow him to-day? Let us state this in two propositions: First, the Christian conception of the body includes it in the process of redemption. What do we mean by this? Christianity teaches that the house in which the

soul dwells is not of itself evil. The character of the indweller determines that. Therefore, religion as taught by Christ and operated by the Holy Spirit coming into a man's life carries a dynamic that affects his body as well as his soul. It is not difficult for a modern student of psychology to see this. In the light of physiology he has learned that his physical life is dependent upon nerve ganglia, that his body is a network set frequently with nerve centers which respond to and are controlled by thought impulses. Indeed, they are recognized as psychical centers, where a mental direction is transformed into action, and from which physical impulses become psychic impressions that are later transformed into thought. He also has learned that his thought life counts more with him than the kind of food he eats and the water he drinks. He has discovered within him a system of health protectors, in the form of closely associated glands, producing anti-toxins of so perfect a drug quality that they can be artificially manufactured. These little drug manufacturing concerns distributed along the alimentary canal are under the control of the third sympathetic nervous system, centering in the solar plexus, or, as the psychologist now calls it, the abdominal brain. This brain center is directly connected with the cranial or thought brain, where its control is finally lodged. When the thinking brain is slow and moody, blue, despondent, full of doubt and uncertainty, all the system that has the work of the elimination of the toxins of the body, slows down, and fatigue begins its work of casting weariness throughout the physical man. Speed up the thought life with anticipation, good cheer, faith, and assurance, and health begins to appear, hastening toward abundance. On this physical basis rests the cause for most, if not all, faith healing. God has made it so. A psychic being with delicate channels to carry psychic forces into all parts of the anatomy, proving that man is not a body, but, rather, a soul, dwelling and fitting into a body so that it cannot be extricated from it without the destruction of the visible life. What, then, can produce the psychic impulse of healing and health, moral transformation and spiritual regeneration? It is altogether within the realm of the understanding when the relation of the body to the mind through the function of the third sympathetic nervous system and the abdominal brain is understood. It is a physical approach, but nevertheless true.

The physical is nothing in itself; for all its operations some stimulant must be found in a man's thought life. What, then, is the highest motive, the strongest stimulant? The answer is, Religion. In the field of religion where is the strongest motive released? Answer again, Love for Christ. A continuous affection for him and a persistent desire to be like him will produce spiritual or psychic power within that will modify man's physical brain, produce new functional areas, enlarge old ones, and make him a new creature in disposition and native talents. That is the witness not of the theologian, but psychologist and scientist. If we have Christ's point of view we shall not look upon ourselves as prisoners within this physical dwelling, but accept it as an organism that can be modified, repaired, or enlarged at the owner's desire. The race as it grows older is realizing more what Christ meant when he said, "Whatsoever ye desire when ye pray believe and ye shall have it."

Second, the Christian conception of the soul does not teach its regeneration apart from the physical life. The Holy Scriptures maintain the faith that man is not a body with organs functioning in an articulated relation producing his life. They declare that man is a soul, that his thinking brain is the instrument of him who thinks; while the body, as we have seen, is held together in functioning life by a psychic animation, from which if any part is severed, death ensues. No part of the physical life has existence if separated from the seat or dwelling place of the soul. What then is the Christian conception of soul? It is the self, the personality, the inner man, the *ego*, which limits and conditions itself to growth, and expression through the experiences of human nature. If man is a soul, his great problem is not how to live the physical but the soul life. He cannot live it alone. He must live it with his fellow men and Christ.

Therefore we are brought to consider the second proposition, How is an individual, after finding Christ, going to adjust himself to live his spiritual life within the group life of church membership? The world is ready to condemn the individualist. It demands that he train himself to act and live with his fellow men. An unrelated man is either a vagabond or a rake. The very fact that a man has group relations, that he belongs to clubs, fraternities, associations, and a church, enhances his social value. A recluse, living

unto himself alone, is the suspicion of all who know him, for the modern world demands that he shall live his life associated with his fellow men. It is equally true with a man's spiritual life. He cannot afford to live alone. He must join the company on the way following Christ to the New Jerusalem. But in joining any group of believers he is beset by two perils—loss of personal identity and of individual initiative. How is this possible? In the first place, the church met him with a ritual, written for any and all men, by which he is received into membership. If he has any personal beliefs, they are not to be considered. If he has any distinct experiences, they are treated as without value. The prayers offered for him have been repeated in behalf of thousands before him. He discovers he has been brought in on the common level of all God's children. Afterward, in the public worship, he joins in a form that frequently has no appeal to him. It expresses nothing of his feeling. His prayers are so impersonal that he finds no pleasure in them. As a child he must not lose himself in the family. What shall he do? He must grow in the stature and admonition of the Lord. He must maintain his own individuality. He must pray his own prayer. His devotions must be as distinct and considered as necessary as the food he eats and the water he drinks and the clothes he wears to support him as a man. He must love his Bible, consecrate time for meditation, and meet the Holy Spirit personally each day if he is to grow in grace and a knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. If a believer depends entirely upon public worship, and the accepted ritualistic forms of devotion, to maintain his spiritual life, he may make a good religious ritualist, but never an enthusiastic, evangelical Christian.

Furthermore, when a man joins a company of believers his individual initiative is imperiled. What could Bartimæus do as a witness for Christ after the crowd pressed about him and shut him in? Something marvelous had been done for him which, if told, would increase the company of believers. His gratitude rises within him like the surge of a tide. What can he do? The instinct to proclaim that which thrills the heart takes hold of him. He must witness unto others of the great things the Lord has done for him. What can he do? Here is the great crowd, the ever-present company of believers. Shall he lose his own identity, and witness as they

direct? Shall he surrender his own initiative, and follow the way they have always gone? Verily this is the inevitable problem of every disciple. In its proper solution he finds his soul happiness, and opportunity to enter into an active Christian life, which at the end returns to him many fold the investment of his life for Jesus Christ.

Bartimæus resisted the crowd and found the Christ. His experience revealed the great truth that a personal knowledge of Christ will heal the soul of its afflictions, and that he who joins the company of believers, without first meeting the One in whom they believe, will not share in the joy the Lord Christ came to bring.

The voice of the crowd still calls, when we cry out under conviction for our sins, that we should hold our peace; but the prayer of importunity brings an answer from Him who said, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Finding him, the prayer, "Lord, that I might receive my sight," is answered, to our relief and endless delight.

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS STUDY

1. What do we mean by the afflicted type?
2. How may a physical approach reach a man's soul?
3. What is collective evangelism?
4. What is a mass revival?
5. What are the perils to the individual in a mass revival?
6. What is the conflict between social and individual interests?
7. What threefold salvation did Bartimæus need?
8. How did he resist the will of the crowd and find Christ?
9. Did Jesus have a healing ministry?
10. What is the Christian conception of the body?
11. How far should a man's religious faith be expected to affect his health?
12. In what sense is man a soul?
13. To what extent should a Christian be an individualist?
14. How may a man lose his soul in depending upon the public form of worship?
15. Should a man join the Christ first and later the Church?



The crisis of the conflict between the kingdoms of good and evil took place in the death of Christ: the highest manifestation of good in him—the highest manifestation of evil in the pursuers of those who saw the divinest excellence and called it satanic evil. To call evil good and good evil—to call divine good satanic wickedness, there is no state lower than that. It is the rottenness of the core of the heart: it is the unpardonable because irrecoverable sin. So far as I belong to that kingdom or fight in that warfare, it may be truly said, the Saviour died for my sin. Every time I hate a good man for his meekness or his goodness—find bad motive to account for the excellence of those who differ from me—judge sins of weakness more severely than sins of wickedness—shut God out of the soul to substitute some lie of my own or of society—I am a sharer in the spirit to which he fell a victim. He bore my sins in his body on the tree.—*Robertson.*



## CHAPTER V

# For the Distressed Soul

**The Radical Type**

**The Sympathetic Approach**

**The Evangelism of the Cross**

**The Repentant Malefactor**

SCRIPTURE: Luke 23. 39-45

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

## Prayer

*We thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast called us to be evangelists. Something within us finds the deepest pleasure when we become bearers of good news. We have learned by a study of the life of our Lord that he was always an evangelist. Even on his cross midst the throes of pain, in the silence of suffering, power was released from him that wrought the repentance of a hardened soul. Teach us, we pray thee, how to bear pain and defeat and humiliation, that our fortitude may appeal to men who know thee not. The*

*world is full of suffering. We at times are compelled to bear our share. In that hour, when we face our Calvary, give us the glory of the evangelism of the cross.*

*We do not understand how it is possible for us to enter into fellowship with thy suffering, but we pray that thou wouldest enter into fellowship with our suffering. We want always to be found in thee not having our own righteousness, but possessing that which is by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. We do not expect to rise into his life with all its boundless mysteries and release of power, but we do pray for him to come into our lives. We open our hearts to him with an invitation that he come in and take possession of them. Without him we fail to realize our higher spiritual capacities, but with him all our powers crave that life which is hid with him in God. We do not boast of our attainment, when we remember our failures and recount our shortcomings, but forgetting the things that are behind we press toward the mark of our high calling in Jesus Christ our Lord. If the path of our lives leads upward toward the altar of sacrifice, if we must learn life's greatest lesson on Calvary, if we must submit to the pain of the cross and the death of wound and spear, then help us in that dread hour to pray that all we bear may be made conformable unto death. In this hour of our cross make men to feel the influence of the presence of God, make them to feel the blight of their sins, make them to turn in repentance unto thee.*

*We are thy children seeking thy favor, and earnestly praying that Christ our Lord may give us his Holy Spirit, that we follow him in the light of a conscience void of offense toward God and man. Hear us, we pray, in his name. Amen.*

## Introduction

We have come to the cross of Christ. It is found on Golgotha—the place of a skull: significant statement that supports the observation that he has ever, since that day, found his crucifixion there; while it may be asserted that at the place of the heart he has always found the day of his resurrection. For Calvary presents apart from faith one of the most inscrutable incidents in all the spiritual history of mankind. It has had a marked effect upon men. It presents the cross of Christ, which to one becomes the savor of life

unto life; to another of death unto death. To those who perish, it is always foolishness, being without significance; to those that are saved it becomes the wisdom and power of God. Was it a tragedy without interpretation? Was it an episode occurring as the climacteric of an eventful life? Was it simply an incident in the course of a good and benevolent man's life? If these questions have not arisen in the mind, then the discovery of the cross still remains. It may have been seen in the mind's eye, it may even have been talked about, but if it has not been discovered as a memorable spot on which the human mind becomes assured of the certainty of the most sublime and important religious truths, then the cross of Calvary appears as a stupendous mystery.

Let us consider what are the plain and indisputable facts of the story. Jesus of Nazareth came teaching a gospel of human and divine love. He sought to persuade men to love God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves; to manifest forgiveness, kindness, and always to be merciful. He lived a beautiful life, exercising filial trust and obedience toward God, walked among sinful men and women, living a stainless life. He went about doing good and healing all manner of diseases. The world, with all its burdens of sin and sorrow, heartbreak and death, had need of him. It should have welcomed him with loud acclaim. But the facts prove that it could not make room for him. Strange situation! It could not provide a place for the holy and loving Jesus of Nazareth. It even sought to rid itself of his influence by calling him a son of Beelzebub, repudiated his message as worse than a blasphemy, and condemned his ministry as a crime against society and religion. Parties and classes after long standing feuds came to a temporary truce and joined forces against him, that they might effectually crush him. He was condemned to the cross for crucifixion under the extreme penalty of shame and agony, a fate that was reserved for the worst of malefactors. What did that tragedy of goodness mean? It placed the cross of Calvary on a promontory of time, within sight of all generations of men, where it could become the revelation of the deceit and turpitude, the wickedness and stupidity, the abandon and depravity of the human heart. It also released in the world a new moral attraction—the magnetism of the

cross. Multitudes of every generation since its establishment have thronged in imagination to it and looked upon that crucifixion to feel the thrill of it, to shed a tear of sympathy, to feel rebuke by his faith, to turn away and say, "That was not a tragedy, that was a sacrifice." Human sin wrought that crucifixion. Human perfidy erected that cross, and its contemplation shall never cease to bring a rebuke to man's soul and measure the capacity of goodness to suffer at the hand of iniquity.

**We Are Prone to See Only** one cross on Calvary, but there were three. Each one has a moral significance. The first is the cross of retributive justice—that of the unrepentant thief; the second and central, the cross of redemptive justice—that of the suffering Saviour; the third, the cross of mediative justice—that of the repentant malefactor. Furthermore, they illustrate the operations of the Holy Spirit, whose work is to convict of sin and of righteousness and judgment to come. Conviction working repentance rested upon one. Judgment producing hardness and indifference fell upon another. Righteousness rested upon him who could pray in the midst of his agony, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We do not stop to inquire, "What brought Jesus to his cross?" The answer is not difficult: "The principle of love arrayed against the force and might of man." But it thrusts upon us the mystery of sin, of pain and suffering innocence. It forces Calvary upon human thought as the culmination of the life of Jesus of Nazareth and the mystery about which reason has wrought, as with an age-long problem, and in which the affections of man have found their perennial renewal. It also determines our moral judgment. By the cross we stand or fall. By our attitude toward the Christ of Calvary we take our place with the repentant or the scoffers. For the great sin a man commits is not what he may do so much as the attitude he may take in a moment of time toward the crucified Christ. With one malefactor all the evil of his life did not count in shutting him out of paradise. It was not what he had done, but what he would do before the suffering Christ. He did the right thing at that moment, and was saved. It is, therefore, doubly assured that in the end we are judged by our relation to the cross of Christ. It is the dominant principle of our moral world

which we shall without doubt discover before this study is completed.

## The Radical Type

In full sight of Calvary we come to study the evangelism of the cross. It is here we find the day of settlement for the radical soul. Some men are of that disposition which pushes them to the extreme. They cannot be conservative. They by nature take to the open field. They refuse to be controlled by any restrictions, or to acknowledge the authority of precedent. They fly to the extreme and accept only one view point, disavowing any other. In their opposition they are turbulent and radical. They refuse to listen to reason, but obey the dictates of impulse and rashness. Such men generally come to grief. They are seldom corrected, and are never recovered from their wrong attitude, save by a crisis that threatens crucifixion and death. It is always the radical type that finds the cross the redemption of the soul. Radicalism will work the undoing of either a good man or a bad man, if permitted uninterruptedly to control the life. In the good man it works fanaticism. In the bad man it supports unreasonableness, closes the avenues of the mind to truth, and induces it to take pleasure in falsehood and vilification.

There is only one avenue open to reach the radical type. Being unamenable to reason, he must go the full course of his wrongdoing before an opportunity for his recovery appears. Even then it is only a mere chance. He finally comes to take his punishment. For the evil he has done comes back home to him, or the law he has violated after giving liberty through the years at last intercepts him. But punishment is not always corrective. That depends on the man himself, in what spirit he receives it, or what influences are brought to bear upon him to soften his heart. A man's heart under the process of suffering is as frequently hardened as softened, for it is within the power of a human soul to harden itself until it becomes shrunken into such a tough and irreducible mass that the very grace of God can do nothing with it. An interesting illustration of this is found in the Old Testament story of God's dealing with the Pharaoh of Egypt. His heart was hardened by the signs and wonders and plagues, while by the same means the heart of Israel was tendered to faith

and obedient action. Did God harden the hearts of the Egyptians? The instrumentality of grace to one was condemnation and ruin to the other. Why was this true? It was the fault of the Egyptian himself, just as it is the fault of any man who permits suffering and defeat, disappointment and loss to make him bitter and resentful, while the same experience to another produces humility, sweetness, faith in Christ, and an increased effort at moral rectitude. For it is a law of God's universe that the means of hardening are ever means naturally intended to soften and win. There remains a mystery in dealing with the radical type, not easily solved, that only one out of two when even driven to the cross by retributive justice recovers himself to repentance and God, even under the appeal of the personal presence of our crucified Lord.

### The Sympathetic Approach

The only means of dealing with the extreme radical type is that of the sympathetic approach. This one opens only as the cross of penalty brings the offender to face the record of his wrongdoing. Then reason has no voice, and argument is without avail. For you are dealing with a soul, not a sound and calculating mind. You must tactically deal with prejudices and ill will and maneuver with soreness and narrowness and highly sensitized combativeness. Only experience wins at this point. The emotions are all active and easy of approach. If one has had a similar experience, can show his own wounds, can demonstrate his own recovery, can produce a bond of sympathy by a common experience, he can successfully approach a soul when punishment is working the penalty of the law.

The spiritual insight of our Lord at this point is almost intuitive. When he found a man suffering under the penalty of his own or some one else's sins, he never stopped to inquire who was morally responsible. He restored him to health. He never condemned or upbraided men. He seemed to fail even to carefully diagnose the case of those appealing to him for help. He asked nothing about the past, neither questioned them why they did not have enough judgment to keep out of sin. He healed them, demonstrating a sympathy for their need that had a profound sense of pity.

To those suffering through the operation of the penalty of a violated law he is able to present his own wounds, suffered not through but by the direct malignant resentment of his fellow men. By this means he was able to say, "I have suffered also," and immediately found a way of approach over the common ground of sympathy. The radical type of offenders against God's law and that of society can be dealt with only by the sympathetic approach, because that is not the way of reproach, but of pity and tenderness and ministry. Indeed, in the character of Christ it is central. It is the one passion that makes the lowest indispensable to the highest, the lost sheep to the mighty compassion of the great shepherd, and the penitent malefactor to the matchless power of Christ to open a way from the very gates of hell to the paradise of God.

### The Evangelism of the Cross

The appeal to the imagination of men by the crucified Christ has always had direct approach to the emotions and moral will. Somehow men looking upon him in his suffering find a tender compassion rising within them for expression. In fact, it is the universal judgment, that anyone resisting that appeal is hardened and calloused beyond hope of recovery. At the heart then of the gospel message is the crucified Lord. This appeal of suffering love becomes the dynamic of the gospel appeal. When it fails on an individual, he is gospel hardened and beyond recovery. The cross, then, contains the ultimate strategy of the evangelism of Jesus. It is as many-sided as life itself, and no hard-and-fast doctrine can be drawn from the truth it contains; but at the final analysis it expresses a fundamental law of God's universe, namely, that sacrifice is the supreme condition of peace and increase of life, that self-surrender is the secret of self-realization.

It is interesting to note that Jesus found the cross before he ascended Calvary. In reality, he made it the sign of discipleship when he declared, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." That was the evangelism of the cross, before the day of crucifixion. Cross-bearing is the test of discipleship, and crosses are borne, not to fulfill the duty of the task, but

that some day a Calvary may be found where through crucifixion a man may be rid of his cross. What, then, shall we infer was his teaching on cross-bearing? Fundamentally, that it was the normal law of every life, regulated by a supreme devotion to the heavenly kingdom. Such cross-bearing has a double side, each of which is marked by three lines of activity. In the believer's life among men there are three ways over which he may go to his Calvary: First, always witnessing for truth against falsehood, with a spirit of courage and decision; second, always loving and seeking to serve those whom society has cast out and done its best to ruin; third, always protesting by word and deed against lending sanction to any moral system that makes an artificial distinction between virtue and sin. Let a man persistently shoulder his cross and proceed over any one of those ways, as it was Christ's experience, he will inevitably find his Calvary. The other side of cross-bearing is that of the inner life. It also has three lines of travel. First, the line of cross-bearing that works the final crucifixion of self is that of always and persistently submitting to the intellectual authority of Christ. Second, the bringing into obedience to him all dispositional cravings and enjoyments, the denying ourselves that natural expression of temperament that would offend a delicate Christian conscience. Third, the mortifying of the lower passions and instincts that secure the dominance of the physical life over that of the higher interests of the soul. Let any man take up his cross along any of these lines and he will soon arrive at his Calvary. But it must be remembered that Calvary is not something altogether undesirable. It accomplishes the death of the old life, disposes of the burden of the cross, and hastens the day of the resurrection into a new life, in which we can say with Saint Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2. 20).

The evangelism of the cross culminates in the presentation of the reconciling and redeeming work of Christ. In his suffering and death is his revelation of grace, of sin and of humanity. But central must be seen the expression of the holiness of God's love, for a realization of this deepens error into sin, sin into guilt, guilt into repentance, and repentance

into forgiveness that is not an anodyne of self-flattery through the operation of autosuggestion, but a real and lasting peace of soul through the witness of the Holy Spirit to God's favor.

## The Repentant Malefactor

Out of that Calvary group has gone an imperishable and irresistible influence. The contrast of character is unsurpassed. The association of dissimilar personalities and the profound contact they make upon each other affords an interesting psychological study. Jesus of Nazareth pays the price of preaching to men the gospel of faith, hope, love, honesty, sobriety, and for his faith in himself as a man called of God to fulfill the hopes, answer the anticipations of Israel, and make glad the hearts of the broken and downtrodden. The two malefactors come to the same end, and the same place, and the same suffering, and receive the same punishment for doing the opposite, for rebelling against God, disregarding his law, turning against their fellows, and living a lawless and defiant life—a strange contrast of extreme opposites. What will Jesus do in the presence of these men? Will he seek to win them over to faith in him? Will he even reveal a consciousness of any interest in them, or will he display a weakening of faith in himself and the purpose of his life? Will he betray an inner collapse when he discovers that his fate is that of a common malefactor? Get the picture before the mind with all its many details. It is loaded with elements of psychological interest. The cross of Christ does not stand alone. Those hours on Calvary were the supreme test of his life. The world from that day to this has been asking, "What did he do then?" There he met the common fate of men whom he came to save. Indeed, he demonstrated that a man can live the righteous life so sincerely that it will rebuke the shallow, artificial life of the best among men, that they will condemn him to death on the level of the worst of culprits.

What did Jesus do in the hour of the world's reaction against him? What did he do in his reduced estate with a condemned man on each side of him, and a scoffing and unsympathetic crowd about him? His cross can never be studied apart from that of the two malefactors. It is eternally

associated with them. The supernatural elements of his personality stand out supremely. During those hours he appears as more than man. He was endued with power that no man has ever possessed. The very tragic ending of his life on earth secured the survival of his influence and the worship of his personality as the revelation of the Son of God.

In the hour of physical breakdown the influence of spiritual power did not lose its control over him. He was still the Physician of men and the Comforter of their souls. He remained conscious to the very last of the presence of God and the fulfillment of his purpose in his life. Would his conduct influence those in fellowship with his suffering? Would his fortitude and faith affect them? Yonder the crowd stands jeering, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God." The soldiers near cast lots for his raiment, mocked him, offered him vinegar saying, "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." This was the final attack upon his faith, a direct assault on the very citadel of his soul. We see him receive it and hear him pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That was victory. That spirit could never be reduced even by the most horrid death. That was the triumphant moment. The two malefactors at first joined in the attack of raillery upon him. Finally the center of interest passes from the cross of Jesus to that of one of his associates. That prayer of forgiveness for the persecutors was more than he could stand. It broke up his resistance, dissipated his resentment, reconciled his spirit. He rebukes his companion in crime and appeals to Jesus as Lord, begging to be remembered when he comes into his kingdom.

**The Change of Attitude on the Part of the Penitent Thief** was so radical that it presents a number of points for psychological study.

*First.* His attitude toward the other malefactor. He had first a reaction in his own mind against the heckling of one who was suffering as they were. That incomparable spirit of forgiveness had turned his thoughts inward. He was made to think of God. That struck the depths of fear in his soul. He rebukes his companion saying, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" The soul's

response to that elemental appeal—the thought of God—has its effect. In the tragedy of the soul there is nothing that produces calm and creates an attitude of awe more quickly than the introduction of the thought of God. Derision at least from the cross ceased. Furthermore, he manifested the change of spirit in his own heart by acknowledging his own wrongdoing: "We receive the due reward for our deeds." This reveals the progress he made from introspection to repentance, from repentance to confession, from confession to conversion. He acknowledges the justice of God in the punishment of their sins. However, he does not stop here; he goes further and confesses his faith in the integrity of Jesus who is suffering punishment on the other cross; saying, "He has done nothing amiss." That was a recognition of Jesus, of more than passing comment. It meant that one of the malefactors at least realized that he was not of their class, that while he was with them he was not of them. What would they have said if the high priest Caiaphas or Annas, or Herod, or Pontius Pilate had been crucified with them? The majesty of the personality of Jesus came into its fullest possession of evangelistic power on the cross.

*Second.* The second point of psychological interest is that of his attitude toward Jesus. His prayer, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," was recognition of the kingly claims of Jesus, which without doubt were strangely in eclipse at that moment. A crucified man on his way to a kingdom—how strange and contradictory! They were both in the shadow of death, but one was coming to a crown. What inscrutable influence could produce that impression on the mind of a dying man? That kingdom could not have been on this earth. It implies faith in a future life, a survival of the catastrophe of death. He did not pray for deliverance from the cross, but for provision for himself after it had done its work. The expression of faith in this prayer is unusual. It witnesses to belief in the moral integrity of Jesus of Nazareth, to the truthfulness of his claims as the Messiah of Israel, to the survival of the soul after death, to the reality of the kingdom of heaven, and to the trustworthiness of his own repentance. The spirit of humility in the prayer is almost pathetic. If there is pity in the heart of God, that prayer would find its goal. "Lord, remember me." He does not pray, "Prefer me," "Honor me," "Give me a place on thy

right hand when thou comest into thy kingdom," but "Remember me." He had no claim, no cause to plead. If Jesus would remember him, that would be enough to permit him to suffer and die in peace.

The attitude of Jesus toward the repentant sufferer presents a number of problems that only faith can accept. First, he met his change of demeanor with a frankness that was the full expression of the spirit he had always manifested toward men in difficulty. The penitent commits himself to Jesus, who without reserve receives him. The man's past life, his record, his habits, his godlessness, do not seem to enter now into the case. At the very threshold of death, at the last moment, when there was no time for reparation, no time for building character; when he could not be saved for this world, when he could not be given another chance, when he could not possibly be saved by his record, he surrenders himself to Jesus Christ and the mercy of God. He accepts by faith the promise made him at that moment, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise": after the cross, paradise; after death, life and boundless joy.

What did Jesus mean by "paradise"? An invisible world, a place destined and prepared for them. Not a state of unconscious blessedness; not an existence of nonpersonal survival in Deity, but a life with him, not in him, nor of him. That means conscious joy, for to be with him is paradise. There—where—means location, means place, means distinctive individualistic existence, personal immortality. "To-day"—immediate upon death; "with me," the souls of those who trust in him, being delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity with Christ in his paradise of God. This is his answer to all questions about the life after death. We cannot know more. This given in the words of Christ if accepted by faith and cherished in love will quiet the heart and support the mind as it is thrust by time and human experience against the impenetrable darkness of the unknown world beyond the gates of death.

The crucifixion scene at a final analysis suggests three fundamental questions:

*First.* How far may a man go in sin before moral recovery become impossible? When two men are placed in the same circumstances, one will repent and the other remain untouched. Why is this true? It is the difference between the

men themselves. It may mean one of two things in the case of the unrepentant. The right approach may not have been used, or he may have hardened himself by continuous violation of God's law and resistance to his conscience, that all the finer feelings within are dead. However, this must not be passed over lightly. Few men by a lifelong course of sinning so pervert their spiritual perceptions that they can look upon the cross of Christ with its appeal of suffering love without breaking before it. When sin no longer cuts a gash in the conscience, when there thrusts no hurt at the thought of wickedness, when the burden of iniquity rests upon the shoulders as a light weight, when the soul comes not to care and commits itself in abandon to wrongdoing, then it may be said that the zone of the irrecoverable lost has been reached. But it should be stated that no man can judge when his fellow man has passed over that divide. For it is verily true that no matter how far a man may go into sin, his heart is never as far away from God as his life.

Christ taught that there is a sin for which there is no forgiveness. He designated it as the sin against the Holy Spirit. By that he meant a persistent refusal to accredit the voice of right and wrong that God has placed in man, which course attributes that which is of God to the devil. More remotely it stands for the violation of that inner protest, that moral revulsion against the thing that sickens all the sensibilities until a man can walk into the blackest sin without a tremor. It means that in the case of a soul sinning against its finer feelings slowly the spiritual sense begins to weaken until the inexorable law of atrophy demands the full payment of its violation, and the fine spiritual sensibilities through disuse or misuse begin to disappear. The keen sense of right and wrong is reduced. The inner light that throws its radiance over the life of the soul grows dim. The man at the last walks in inner darkness—like the impenitent thief, even on the cross of his own crucifixion, can look upon the suffering Christ and never feel a pang of conscience or a thrust of self-condemnation.

There are scientific thinkers who readily dispose of this question by avowing that the persistent course of a godless life sends all men over the irrecoverable brink. They claim character becomes set and in maturity is unalterable. Habits of thought, tastes, passions, appetites, make the man. What

he is then cannot be modified. If a man neglects Christ, it is claimed he not only misses salvation, but loses the capacity to enjoy it should he have the opportunity to receive it. This teaching looks plausible until the soul itself is taken into account. There is a point beyond which its integrity cannot be reduced. The more it is confined in darkness, the brighter it shines. It may be a small flame, but nothing we do or say can destroy it. If that were possible, the annihilation of the soul would be a reality, and it could be brought about by man himself. A soul may still exist and be beyond the redemptive grace of God, or else the future life contains no punitive justice for those who do not receive it here.

*Second.* How can a man be saved at the last moment of his life when his record would end him in perdition? Is there salvation without the possibility of living the Christian life? To what extent is a death-bed repentance to be valued? When a man's life has been lived apart from God, when at times it has risen to open rebellion against the approaches of his spirit, there is small chance for an awakening in his last moments. Only a few men repent and turn to God at the gates of death. Some do as the penitent thief. How is it possible? No man can explain the psychology of it. The fact is that men do in their last moments awaken spiritually, cry unto God, and are saved. How can God do it and preserve the integrity of his moral universe? By the exercise of his infinite mercy, which may act when appealed to with as much power as the immutable laws he has placed in operation in his universe. Then our conclusion on this point must be that, after all, by an appeal to mercy a man may be saved regardless of his moral record.

*Third.* What, then, is the specific that works the salvation of the soul of man? What is the answer to this question? Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Character and a record of personal righteousness are not the total factors at the last analysis in the salvation of the soul. The great and indispensable fundamental is faith. Faith, however, is potential character. Christ made it the only and sufficient condition of admission to the kingdom of God—faith alone with reference to repentance, with reference to sin, with reference to forgiveness, with reference to Christ as a personal Saviour. For faith has a strange fascination for the soul. In its exercise it exerts all its

energies of apprehension on the one hand, and receptivity on the other. In its highest ranges it is purely a soul function that works when set upon Jesus Christ, the transformation of the soul, the modification of its powers, and the regeneration of its moral desires. Jesus Christ, then, must be appreciated as Saviour. Man cannot save himself. He has no power of self-regeneration, nor spiritual perception which of itself can find its way to God. Faith in him is the medium of salvation. The penitent malefactor, caught up at the last moment after a reckless and godless life, paid the earthly penalty of his wrongdoing, but by committal of himself to Christ entered with him into the paradise of God.

**Conclusion.** Every man should some day find his Calvary. Before he can go free his evil self must be crucified. It was not intended by our Lord that those who love him should always find a cross in all obedience to him. He has intended that a Calvary should be found. He says, "Take up thy cross and follow me." Follow where? Men are of small service with crosses on their backs. Yes, it is forward with him to yonder promontory. If a man goes not, he remains in the common conscience, with the common virtues, with the common faith, or with the common doubt and mediocrity. There is no sainthood for him. If he goes out upon that height bearing his cross, he will be taken captive, the frightful moment of dying unto self will mark the culmination of his crucifixion unto this world. Henceforth he will become a man of the spirit, blessed of the Holy Spirit, a man of redeemed powers, a thinker dilated, enlarged, a seer dreaming dreams and holding high communion with his Lord. Henceforth a certain portion of his life belongs to the spirit. An element of the boundless enters into his being, into his conscience, into his virtue, into his faith. He is a man having followed Christ to Calvary, and returns in newness of life as one having walked on the boundless heights with God.

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS STUDY

1. What is a radical type?
2. What is a sympathetic approach?
3. What is the evangelism of the cross?
4. Was the death of Jesus a tragedy or a sacrifice?

5. What are the facts in the story of Jesus of Nazareth?
6. Give a characterization of the three crosses on Calvary.
7. Give a characterization of the penitent malefactor.
8. How did Jesus compose himself upon the cross?
9. What was it in Jesus that appealed to the penitent thief?
10. What was the attitude of Jesus toward those who suffered with him?
11. What did Jesus mean by "paradise"?
12. What three things does a final analysis of the crucifixion seem to suggest?
13. How far can a man go in sin and be recovered?
14. What was it that saved the penitent thief?
15. Why is it that the same experience will draw some men to God and drive others away from him?

Paul, a saint for the church, a great man for humanity, represents that miracle—at once divine and human—conversion. It is he to whom the future has appeared. It leaves him haggard; and nothing can be more superb than this face, forever wondering, of the man conquered by the light. Paul, born a Pharisee, had been a weaver of camels' hair for tents, and a servant of one of the judges of Jesus Christ, Gamaliel; then the scribes perceiving his fierce spirit, had educated him. He was a man of the past, he had guarded the clothes of the stone-throwers; he aspired, having studied with the priests, to become an executioner; he was on the road for this. All at once a wave of light emanates from the darkness and throws him down from his horse; and henceforth there will be in the history of the human race that wonderful thing—the road to Damascus. That day of the metamorphosis of Saint Paul is a great day—keep the date; it corresponds to the twenty-fifth of January in our Gregorian Calendar. The road to Damascus is essential to the march of progress. To fall into the truth and rise a just man, a transfiguring fall, that too is sublime. It is the history of Saint Paul; from his day it will be the history of humanity.—*Victor Hugo.*



## CHAPTER VI

# For the Violent Soul

**The Fanatical Type**

**The Concealed Approach**

**Elemental Evangelism**

**The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus**

SCRIPTURE: Acts 26. 1-23

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

Which knew me from the beginning if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

## Prayer

*O Lord, we thank thee for thy Holy Spirit which has been with us since the day we gave our hearts to Christ. We have needed him, more than we shall know, until we go to be with thee. We do not always willingly turn our thoughts*

to thee. We do not even at all times love the things of light and truth. Something within us deadens our higher aspirations, and seeks to pull us down to the level of those who love not Christ and live a godless life. We do not understand why we must suffer these experiences. They are painful, and we hesitate to mention them unto thee. Thou dost know of them and wilt not only deal patiently with us, but enable by the Holy Spirit's assistance to understand how the reaction of our own spirits under the influence of thine will bring us again to power and light.

We remember our moments of violence against thee. When we refused inwardly to do thy will. When something led us to say, We will not have thee to rule over us. Then the windows of our souls were closed, darkness settled about us and we wrestled with our evil selves even unto the break of day. Then with the victory came the assurance that thy Spirit had not departed from us, but rather had been present, furnishing motive and desire for the struggle that brought us back into self-control and favor with thee.

We thank thee for the presence in our lives of the Holy Spirit. We thank thee that he comes to be with all those who give their hearts to Christ, to guide and empower, to control and comfort, to encourage and enlighten. We thank thee for the promise of that coveted experience in which he is promised not only to be WITH US, but IN US. We have meditated on the words of our Lord when he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." We follow in faith and anticipation that we may come into possession of the deep things of the Spirit. Keep us faithful, and guide us into the ways of usefulness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Introduction

The evangelism of Jesus for the violent soul presents one of the most profound studies for the modern psychologist. How can a mind generate within itself forces that capture it against its will? There are mental states of indecision

which produce a struggle between two opposing forces, either in opinion or moral impulse, but the soul maintains its throne of judgment, exercises its power of inhibition, maintaining a position of strange neutrality until the time for action arrives. When the struggle proceeds until an effort is made to thrust upon it something against which all its tastes and sentiments revolt, there appears violent opposition which continues until the soul gains its former poise and self-control. The Christian thinker believes that a soul even in its violent opposition against Christ can be brought to faith in him. Indeed, he argues that God has provided a means by which the mind is not left to its own decision whether it will serve and acknowledge him. By the teaching of the Holy Scripture and Christian experience, he contends, we have abundant reason for believing that objective independent influence is brought to bear upon a soul, even in fanatical opposition to the claims of Christ to bring it to surrender. This work of conviction and capture of a resisting soul is one of the duties of the Holy Spirit. The best illustration of this is the apprehension and conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus.

### The Fanatical Type

It is then to the fanatical type that we come in this chapter. A man in his opposition to the truth of Christ may not be radical. He may be indifferent. He becomes an extreme type when that truth begins to form in his mind an impact against his resistance. If it fails to reach this point, it will not arouse his opposition. The very fact that he becomes active, that he resents the approach of the new truth in his life, proves it is working in and gaining on him. He is compelled to resist. The fanatical type is extreme and often unreasonable in its opposition against the claims of Christ. He resists with all his soul, frequently under the motive of a conviction that he is right. Being pressed, he becomes threatening and finally violent. Through this experience often a man passes, being won by the Holy Spirit to acknowledge Christ. It is not a passing experience easily explained. All the facts cannot be accounted for within the sphere of a man's mental life. An outside influence must be taken into account. Saul's journey to Damascus as a fanatic seeking

to defend and preserve the age-long truths he loved and revered, has become the path of growth for all great souls. The experience found there an illustration of how enlargement of mind comes by the inbreaking, not the outbreaking, of light, and reveals that marvelous seizure of the soul by the truth of Christ that cannot be explained without taking supernatural influences into account.

## The Concealed Approach

The man who becomes fanatical and violent in his opposition to Christ cannot be reached save by a concealed approach. He hedges himself about by those who agree with him. His opposition becomes set. He commits himself to a certain line of convictions and champions a definite course of action. He places himself in a position where he cannot go back on his own expressed views without stultifying his intellect. He pursues his opposition until he must see it through or discredit himself. He displays the control of an obsession. He cannot be reasoned with, while appeals fail to reach him. He is set in his course of opposition to such an extent that those who disagree with him are met with violence. He breathes out cruelty and threatenings against them. For the opposition to reach and win him to its side requires expert wisdom and a concealed method of approach that the most crafty cannot even suspicion. It cannot be personal influence, it cannot be argument, it cannot even be dissension; it cannot be accomplished in a moment of time; it is beyond the thought of instantaneousness as far as human knowledge can discern. It must be an approach concealed by the unseen working of the Holy Spirit, who, independent of human personality and not subject in his operations to the limitations of time or space, works conviction in the minds that oppose Christ, and afterward brings them to surrender to his claims. It is a matter of faith, established by many experiences enjoyed by those who have had wide evangelistic opportunities, that men in whom the most violent opposition to the gospel message has developed, frequently become the most enthusiastic converts. The mystery of their conversion parallels that of Saint Paul and witnesses to the unseen work of the Holy Spirit in reducing the opposition of the violent and bringing him in submission to do the will of Christ.

## Elemental Evangelism

This brings us to the statement of the elemental fact of the evangelism of Jesus. This can be given only by a two-fold statement. It must be a distinct fact that distinguishes his work from all other religious leaders, and also from the growth of the natural spiritual instincts common to men. What is that elemental fact? It is the release in a man of a spiritual power that checks his moral course, releases the control of evil habits, and propensities that have imbedded themselves in his physical constitution, establishes a reaction against them that discredits their rule over his will, and sickens the soul with thoughts of them, working a radical moral change called spiritual regeneration. How does it operate? By producing repentance, that is regret, self-condemnation, inward self-denunciation; by producing a desire to confess sins that burden the mind, by numerous symptoms of soul-sickness in which mental perplexity and depression weakens the established course of action, causing the spirit of hardness to give way to that of forgiveness, that of selfishness to love of others, working a universal transformation of the man. However, with this process, which is always wrought by faith in Jesus Christ, there appears a sense of gratitude to and love for him that is strangely unique. It manifests itself as an intense personal apprehension of Christ as Master, Redeemer, and Lord. In the sphere of the spiritual emotions the apprehension of Christ becomes so persistent and absorbing that the dominant element of the life becomes an impulse to work the actual identification of the will with that of Christ; and to gain a union with him that will be so real as to result in the reincarnation of his life in the believer's heart. No other religion is builded upon this spiritual relation of the disciple with its founder.

Furthermore, the elemental fact that distinguishes Christ's evangelism from that of the apprehension of natural spiritual instincts in the course of their development, may be stated as mysterious, sometimes crucial and frequently crisal. It is mysterious in that it cannot be entirely accounted for by a survey of facts within the man himself. It is crucial because a moment appears when the great mysterious fact passes into a comprehensible reality. It is crisal because the moment of transition may be marked by a crisis that not only changes

the heart, but lifts the man out of the old life into the new. Moreover, it proves that Christianity is not a religion that comes up with a man, but one that comes down to fill the capacity furnished by nature for its reception.

The elemental fact of the evangelism of Jesus is found within the realm of the spirit. It manifests itself as the work of the Holy Spirit in producing conviction for sin, and a sense of alienation, which results in the soul throwing itself by faith upon Christ as a proffered Saviour, who with power bestows forgiveness and restores into actual favor with God.

## The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus

The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is one of the most spectacular events in the spiritual history of man. The spiritual world as presented by the Holy Scriptures cannot be entered by any man of thoughtful mind without it being sighted as one of the most outstanding incidents of that realm. Indeed, it reveals a remarkable relation with another that has never ceased to be the supreme wonder of human thought. Many paths have been struck into this spiritual world over which the souls of men pass on the wings of thought, but there are two great highways that have never failed to attract attention, to produce speculation and to invite men to enter. One is the road to Calvary, the other the road to Damascus. On Calvary Jesus of Nazareth died, terminating his earthly career. On the way to Damascus Saul of Tarsus died, terminating his narrow Jewish life, and rising, became Saint Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles. Many men have tried to explain this marvelous and miraculous conversion, because it is one of the most irreducible experiences in the spiritual life. Therefore we approach it with much prayer for guidance, that we may discover its evangelistic content.

In Capturing a Violent Soul all approaches—spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical—will be used, with a concealed purpose to ambush and demand its immediate surrender. We must expect to find this to be true in a study of Saul of Tarsus. He went forth breathing out threatenings and cruelty against the new faith. He was an individualist of the individuals. He made his work of persecution a per-

sonal matter. He did not use the word "we" representing his party, though he was a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin. He used the first personal pronoun "I" more than any other writer in the New Testament. In his defense before King Agrippa he stands alone. He disclaims having acted in the name of any body of men; no group, no organization, no class of society had any influence over him. He was not under orders when he went forth to persecute the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, though under authority. The personal pronoun repeatedly parades in his sentences, "I think myself happy," and "I shall speak for myself," and "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." His course was always that of one who assumed authority to lead. He did not act for others, even though he was supported in his purpose by the priests. When the Spirit of Christ approached him it was not necessary to disentangle him from his social or religious group. He stood out in front. If there was a group, he commanded it. If there was an organization, he was its spokesman. His opposition to Jesus of Nazareth was a personal matter. He showed a personal enmity by a long course of plotting and persecutions. He had voted death in the Sanhedrin (Acts 26. 9-11), superintended punishment in the synagogues, and forced Christians to abjure their faith. He persecuted them from city to city. He prosecuted his ill will with a feeling that he was giving obedience unto God and became a religious fanatic.

As an individualist of individuals he required a conversion that would distinguish him as one of a particular class. Only a highly differentiated method of approach could reach him. He had entered upon a violent course. He could not be caught with his group of supporters. He would escape and form another band. He must be singled out of the group, made a center of approach for all the heavenly forces that play upon a human soul. Physical violence must be met by superior spiritual force. Saul of Tarsus could not be converted any other way.

However, let it be remembered that Saul was an upright man in moral conduct. He was not a physical sinner. His personal life was not marred and scarred by vice and evil habits. He was a religious man living a pure personal life. His sins were all on the side of disposition. Beastly passions

did not rage within him as far as we know, but resentment, bitterness, and malice came finally to possess him. He had a religion that without doubt was the highest expression of the spiritual life of his day. It expressed itself in first a passion for personal righteousness, second, a passion for observing the law, third, a passion for the truth of Israel. A passion for personal righteousness is a fundamental of Old Testament religion. When the fires burn low it becomes the seat of hypocrisy, and the individual learns how to win the rewards of religion while escaping its burdens. With Saul there was that primary conviction that the one prize that makes life worth living is the love and favor of God. This conviction grew into a passionate longing as he advanced in the years of his young manhood, and he no doubt asked his teachers how the prize was to be won. The unanimous answer was, By keeping the law. This passion was fed by the promise that the Messiah would come to a nation observing the law; and it was claimed that if even one man kept it perfectly for a single day, the Lord's Anointed would appear. Saul was religious, devoted, and a man of moral passion. He threw the entire drive of his nature to the realization of a perfect day in his life. It became a consuming passion with him, and was unconsciously carried in that state of mind where intolerance led him to oppose all who had different ideas from those he cherished.

However, it must not be forgotten that at the beginning of his course Saul was a man of exemplary character. His was a noble nature; his was a tender heart. He was a student under Gamaliel, the advocate of humanity and tolerance, who had counseled the Sanhedrin to leave the Christians alone. He must have been greatly influenced by that large-hearted man. Surely, he was too young to have hardened his heart to the appeal of pity and to the disagreeableness of a ghastly work of persecution. Surely, that was not congenial to the natural temper of his mind. His highly strung religious zeal was a fertile field for the spirit of intolerance to take up its dwelling. Something happened—the Word does not tell—that made out of him a violent persecutor. We may infer that it was something that violated his sense of right and regard for the law of God. Without doubt it was the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Anointed of God, the Messiah of Israel. To him that claim became a

travesty on his religion and an outrage against the teaching of the prophets. It stirred him to the depths of his being. When he discovered that the new doctrine was gaining believers in Jerusalem and other cities, all the fire of his spirit broke loose. He became a zealot who had resolved in the name of God to exterminate the heresy by persecuting even unto death those who were preaching it and those who had accepted it. He entered the path of a violent soul with a sincere purpose, thinking he was doing the will of God, who could not permit him to pursue that course without seeking at an early moment to bring him to disillusionment.

**Herein We Discover the Evangelism of the Holy Spirit** as he concentrates spiritual force to apprehend a violent soul. However, the culmination is with a revelation of Jesus as the Christ and the acknowledgment of him as the Lord and Master of the souls of men.

The avenues of approach seem to have been ignored, unless we look deeply into the working of the mind of Saul. The spiritual approach seems to have been open, for he was under a strong spiritual impulse. But the highway was obsessed with the set conviction that he was doing the will of God. The intellectual approach seems to have been open, for he was acting under a strong mental impulse. But the way was preempted by prejudice and registered resolves of highly colored intolerance. The moral approach seems to have been open, for he was acting under the firm conviction that he was right; but the way was occupied by impulses of malice and hatred. The physical approach seems to have been open, for he was acting under the animation of all his physical powers; but the way was marked by violence and the air filled with cruel threatenings. What method of approach could possibly be used in gaining this soul to consider fairly the truth of Jesus Christ?

What, then, is the psychology of his apprehension? Is it one of surprise and sudden ambush? Let us follow his course. He is on his way to Damascus with authority from Jerusalem to arrest the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. A cavalcade of horsemen is accompanying him. The journey is almost completed. He has had ample time to think over the course he will pursue when arriving in the city. He may also have had many thoughts about those whom he had per-

secuted. Suddenly at midday a great light burst upon him and he falls to the ground. A voice speaks to him saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." Saul, conscious of what he is doing, replies, "Who art thou?" The unseen one answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Then Saul, overwhelmed, reduced, broken inwardly and humbled outwardly, answers in pathetic tones, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" That was the voice of one thoroughly convinced, and the expression of a soul transformed and being released from former driving impulses, asks for a new course, for a new regime, for new impulses, for a new life. Jesus whom he had persecuted has conquered and gives to his submissive captive a new commission, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I shall appear unto thee." Saul obeyed a further injunction to go to the city, to the home of one Ananias, who would restore his vision and instruct him in the way. He assured King Agrippa that he was not disobedient to that heavenly vision, and later went forth with zeal and wisdom to preach the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Christ, and to be known among believers as Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

To us he becomes the first great example of the working of spiritual forces in transforming a violently antagonistic soul into one of enthusiasm for Christ. He is the first demonstration of the full expression of the power of the Holy Spirit to break down the active opposition of men's souls, producing an example of instantaneous conversion. He is also the great example of the evangelism of Jesus working independent of human instrumentality, conquering resistance, subduing violence, and capturing a sinister and brutal persecutor. The only method that succeeds in a case of this kind is spiritual, which closes up over all ways of approach until the soul is ambushed, and then in a moment of time is unhorsed and subdued by the Divine Spirit.

The evangelism of Jesus for the violent soul accomplishes its purpose by the rapidly closing in of spiritual forces, in which the final action is a precipitous capture. A little deeper delving into all the lines of truth that must be considered reveals three necessary inferences.

*First.* There must have been a previous course of operation, though we are unable to see it, for an ambush does not come by accident. Plan and motive always require a thinker.

*Second.* A persecutor is never an accident. He is a result. Saul somewhere along his course had lodged within him the truth of Christ, either in word or by the beautiful life of those whom he had persecuted. Surely, the death of Stephen had its influence upon him. It started the inner conflict in which he sought to resist any accrediting of the faith and witness of the followers of Jesus; and that truth pressed in upon him the struggle against its claims intensified, assumed an irrational fierceness, until it became outwardly violent against those who would support it.

*Third.* Truth has of itself no power to capture a soul against its will. It was the impact of spirit upon spirit. It was the exercise of that higher method of communicating truth spoken of by our Lord when he said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." That is, God has power of immediate communication with the intuitions of man by which he may impart knowledge and reveal his will. An impersonal force cannot influence, modify, or transform personality. Hence, the demand for a faith in the distinctive office and personality of the Holy Spirit. Jesus realized this, and frequently during the closing days of his earthly career instructed his disciples on the work of the Comforter. In characterizing his duties, he said, "He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." If a serious-minded man makes the inquiry, "Who managed the campaign of strategy that captured the soul of Saul of Tarsus and transformed him into an enthusiastic supporter and champion of the cause of Christ?" what other answer is there but this: "He was caught up by the Spirit of the Lord"?

**After a Careful Consideration** of this highly dramatic incident, one inevitable question thrusts itself upon the mind—What influence would his conversion have upon his teaching? A violent and instantaneous conversion makes a great im-

pression upon the mind. Would it not influence his doctrine of Christian salvation? He was converted as a man in mature years, salvation came to him by the way of seemingly irresistible grace, it produced a crisis in his life, and made a cataclysmic change in him. It is human nature to establish this as a fundamental, and call all to experience it. But Nathanael the mystic, and Nicodemus the devout, and the woman of Samaria, the sinful, and Bartimæus the blind, did not find Christ along the path of overpowering conviction, that wrought a moral upheaval, but by a direct, quiet opening of the mind to the apprehension of Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of the living God, and a strange and complete capture of the heart with abounding enthusiasm for him.

In the light of these various experiences it appears that there are two classes of believers to-day who bear the name and responsibility of Christians. The first is composed of those who come quietly into the realization of the Christian faith. They may have been reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, being among those who have never gone out of the kingdom of God. When the days of adolescence arrived they made their choice to follow Christ and surrendered their lives to him. They may not know the time and the place where they were converted. They base their claim to salvation on the assurance that they love Christ, pray to him, and in his name approach the throne of heavenly grace, and have no future of joy and comfort apart from him. This is becoming a very distinct class to-day in the churches. It grows and widens its influence during a period when adult conversion is not emphasized. It is the Episcopal method of increasing the number of believers. While adult conversion may be believed in, it is not depended upon to assure the survival and perpetuity of the church. This Christian type believes in and enjoys a stately ritualistic service, encourages religious education, and trusts in confirmation and Decision Day rather than conversion by a spiritual crisis as the initiation into the Christian life. With this class the mass and community revival is not in favor; salvation is not wrought so much by repentance and contrition as by spiritual taste, moral choice, family predilections and Christian training, based upon a knowledge of the unfolding life. The second class is composed mostly of those who come into a religious experience in mature years, who have had a

spiritual crisis and know the time and place where they were converted. They register a period in their lives when they were away from God. They witness to a sense of sin, and to an experience in which they felt they were lost and were greatly distressed. In that moment they threw themselves by faith on Christ as their personal Saviour, and in a moment of time found peace and great joy in the witness of faith that they were saved. Many of this class were converted in a mass revival, with all of its informality, its noise and appeal, its democracy and power. They feel that religion is a positive and active thing, with power to change a man's heart and liberate his spirit. They care little for ritual and stately forms. They want emotion. They enjoy noise and enthusiasm. Sin is a real thing that ruins men. Christ is a Saviour, the very thought of whom fills their breasts with abounding joy. Salvation to them is not a matter of decision. It is a matter of necessity. It is not an act of intellectual perfection, but an act of soul by which all its powers react and revolt against the dominance of sin in the life. To this class the Christian life is a birth in a moment of time wrought not by generation but by regeneration. It believes in revivals and expects them. It believes in spiritual crises, prays for conviction, believes in the cataclysmic work of the Holy Spirit as the most trustworthy means of bringing the soul to God. These two classes are found in the modern evangelical denominations, and their predominance determines the type of Christianity possessed by each local church. Sometimes these two classes in the same membership become a source of conflict, but when properly adjusted, and when they understand themselves, they form a balance that produces a well-poised and effective church.

In valuing the evangelism of Jesus, the emphasis must not be laid on the method, but the goal. Christ, as a Saviour from sin, is its object. Much must be made of the power and office of the Holy Spirit. Christianity is a supernatural religion. It possesses that inscrutable power to impact truth upon the mind, increasing its pressure, until a brain storm is produced, and the entire being is transformed. The apprehending of a mature man, full of violence against Christ, and converting him into a docile, obedient man, asking for something to do for the cause he has hated, is a miracle wrought only by influences operative in the realm of faith.

The wrecking of a man's life in its maturity by breaking up lifelong habits of thought and morals, and the establishment of new endowments of motive power for the highest living, is wrought by supernatural influences. It is a witness to the most unique force of the Christian religion, which operates through the functioning of the third Person of the Trinity—the dynamic of God, the Holy Spirit.

**Conclusion.** There is in the spiritual world a great outstanding highway to God that cannot be overlooked. It is the road to Damascus. It stands in contrast with that of the road to Calvary. It is the way of the man haggard in his opposition to Jesus of Nazareth. It betrays itself in violence, and ends in an ambush where dethroned and broken a man is thrown upon the ground and conquered by the light. It represents a man falling into the truth and rising in the light, a self-deceived man, battling against himself and falling into the darkness of wrongdoing, to rise a just man, transfigured by a fall. He made the road to Damascus an inbreaking of supernatural light, the place on which an unseen person mastered a violent soul by the seizure of powers that refused to register themselves for human inspection. Henceforth men will seek to travel that road in search of God. Men who yearn for a manifestation of divine justice to their eyes, fast closing by the cataracts of blind consent; men searching for convictions that transform the soul; men following the great adventure after the allurement of virtue; men drawn forward by the quest of the unseen, will seek that way, thinking that it, and it alone, is the way of great minds, toward rest and self-realization. It is the route from the dead past to an ever-living present. It leads forward and upward, but always to the crash and the flash of lightning, when the violent soul sinks broken in its opposition to cry out "Who art thou, Lord?" and to pray in humble confession, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

### QUESTIONS FOR CLASS STUDY

1. What is a fanatical type?
2. What is meant by a concealed approach?
3. What is elemental evangelism?
4. What is the elemental fact of the evangelism of Jesus?

5. Give a characterization of the road to Calvary and the road to Damascus.
6. What led Saul to become a violent opposer of Jesus of Nazareth?
7. How is a soul ambushed for God?
8. How can violent antagonism be turned into sympathy and favor?
9. What influence did this violent conversion have on his conception of Jesus?
10. Name and characterize the three types of Christian believers.
11. In what sense is Christianity a supernatural religion?
12. What explanation is there for an adult conversion other than that of divine power?
13. What is the goal of the evangelism of Jesus?
14. Should all men expect to have a spectacular conversion like that of Saul of Tarsus?
15. What will make a man opposing Jesus a center of the evangelistic forces of the Holy Spirit?

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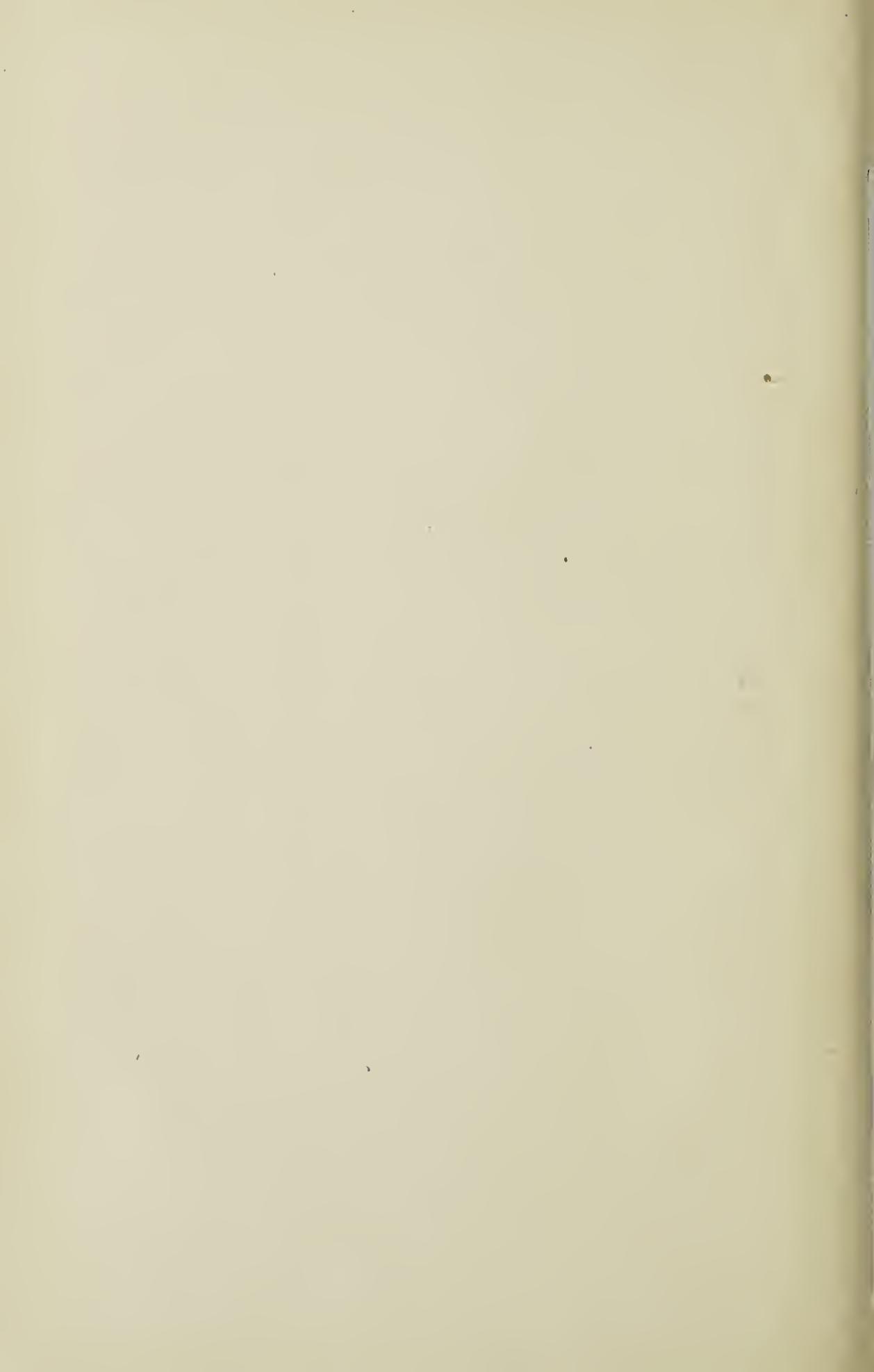


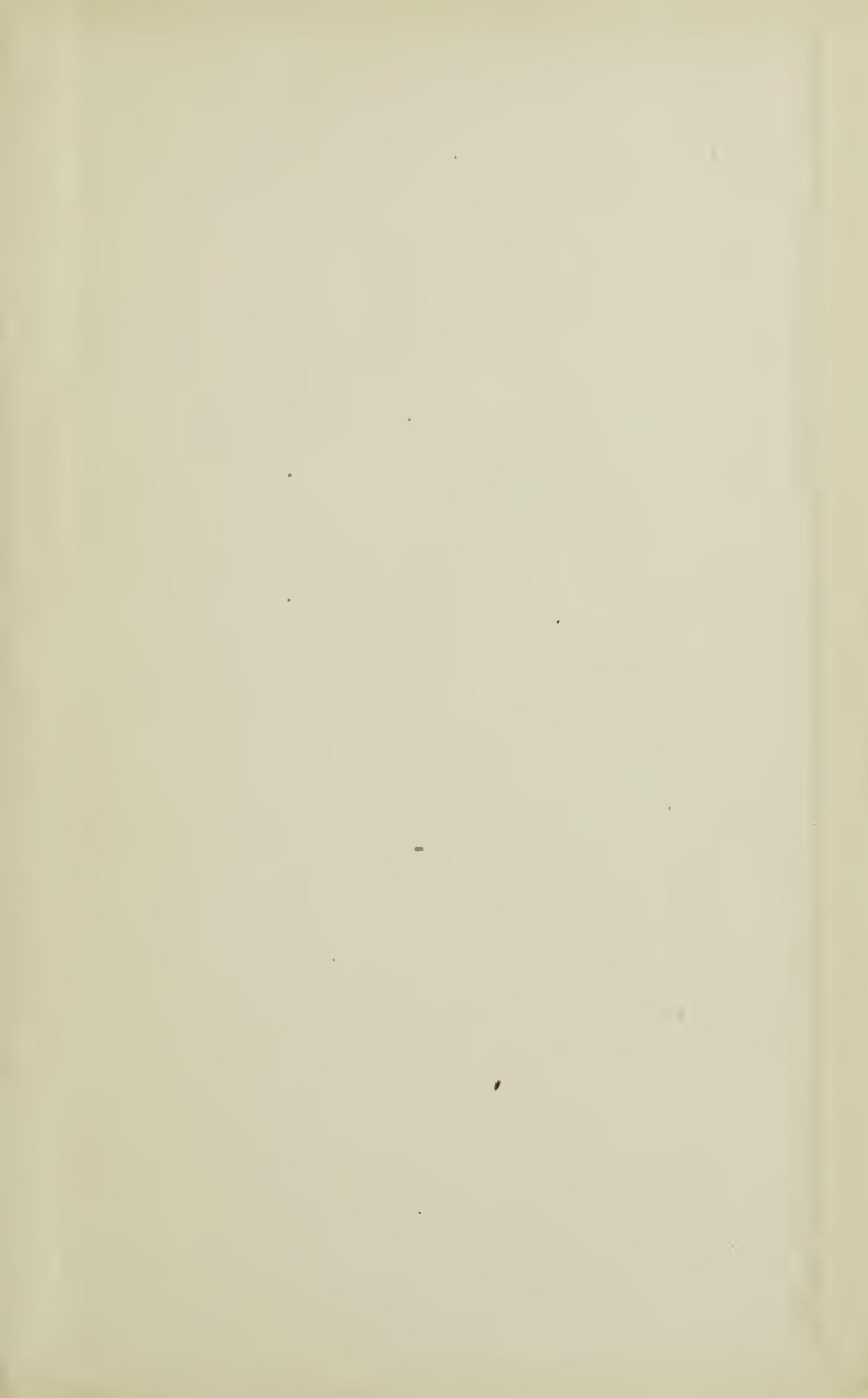












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